



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

Spread the Word



Welcome to the latest edition of Spread the Word, in which we take a look back at what's been going on in school over the last term. As always, there's so much to talk and think about after what has been another very busy few months. We hit the ground running in September and it seems we've been running ever since with our children busy enjoying a wealth of activities and experiences over the course of the term in addition to their normal curriculum work.



When looking back the term, there are so many things I could point to as highlights, from residential visits to some fabulous achievements in sporting activities to the really well supported parental workshops we held earlier in the term; there literally is so much to celebrate. However, it's the learning journey our children are on, and the small steps they take each day which leads to the progress they make over the term which really stands out. Not only does this demonstrate our curriculum at work, it demonstrates the positive attitudes our children display on a daily basis and their willingness to engage in their learning. As a result, the progress and improvements we see over the term are often remarkable.

A real highlight of the term was finally coming back together as a community for our carol service and nativity services. These were sorely missed during Covid and although the video productions were great, they couldn't quite compete with coming together in church to enjoy the children take us through the Christmas story. Equally, our nativity services in school were fabulous events where the excitement of the children was so plain to see. All services were really well attended and, I think I can safely say, enjoyed by everyone, so thank you to everyone who came along to support the children. Could I also thank you for your generosity as, following the collections at the end of our services, we raised £173.65 which will go to the local food bank.

While talking about highlights, I must congratulate Miss Lightfoot and Miss Grigg (second time here) who joined us in September. Their first term with us has been very good and they have settled into the St Stephen's way so well. Another person who has took to her new role extremely well is Mrs Long, our deputy headteacher. Well done to all three and for the contribution they make to our school. On the subject of staffing, we say goodbye to Mr Galley who is leaving to take up a new post from January. I would like to thank him for all his work in the relatively short space of time he has been with us, particularly the contribution to our revised history curriculum. We wish him well for the future. Replacing Mr Galley is Miss Millen, who we are delighted to welcome to St Stephen's. She has already spent the last week with us getting to know the children as well as familiarising herself with curriculum plans for January.

You will see from the magazine that it has been an incredibly busy term and I hope you enjoy taking a look back at what we've been doing.

On behalf of everyone in school, I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and look forward to the new year when we can do it all again.

Best wishes

S.Fallon

Holiday Club

As much as we have had a very busy Autumn term in school, we can't forget to mention the fantastic time children had at holiday club last summer. This is the second year we have run the club and we were determined to build on last year's offer to make it even bigger and better. We have worked closely with North Tyneside Council's Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) team to secure the funding to be able to put together the offer we did for our children and families.



School holidays can be particular pressure points for some families because of increased costs (such as food and childcare) and reduced incomes. For some children that can lead to a holiday experience gap - with children from disadvantaged families less likely to access organised out-of-school activities; more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health; and more likely to experience social isolation.

Funded holiday club places are a response to this issue and evidence suggests that they can have a positive impact on children and young people and that they work best when they provide consistent and easily accessible enrichment activities, for more than just breakfast or lunch, and when they involve children (and parents) in food preparation.

With the objectives of the HAF project in mind, a varied and extensive timetable was put together bringing in a number of external professionals to work with the children on health promoting initiatives. Each day was split into 4 main sessions of activity with a break for lunch. The children were able to choose which activities would populate each of the sessions from at least four options every day. Splitting into sessions allowed them to mix between different activities throughout the day rather than just taking part in one activity type for the duration of the day.



Every day, there were sports activities offered by coaches from Newcastle United Foundation. We saw the children involved in dodgeball, archery, football, multi-skills, table tennis and more, all being enjoyed mostly outdoors in the summer weather. Holiday club attendees were very involved in making tasty treats including smoothies and banana ice lollies. We're sure the children will take these simple recipes and recreate them at home! Boxercise sessions were offered most days by a coach from Discover Fitness - the children enjoyed these sessions so much that we have kept it going during lunchtimes in the Autumn term.



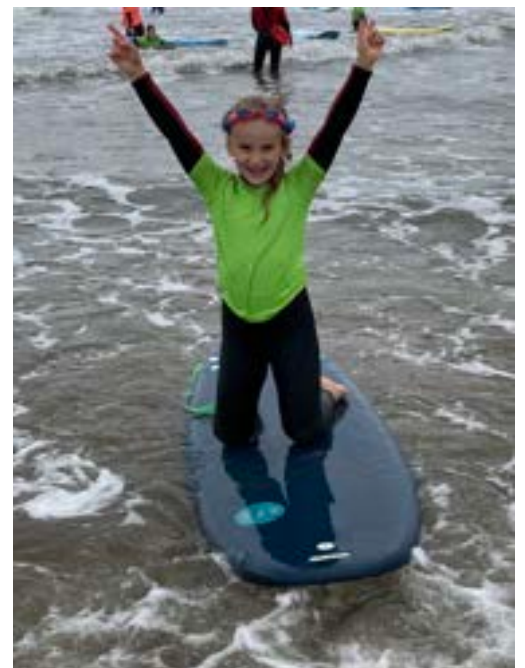
We were fortunate enough to have two sessions ran by Nature Rangers - an organisation attending school to work with groups of children on nature-based activities. The group discussed the 'the power of plants' in one session - why bees are important and how we can connect with nature, before getting off outside to explore if we can find any of these insects and plants! We found lots of juicy berries on our school field, and it was a great opportunity for the children to explore the breadth of our school grounds. The children also learned about how they can care for the outdoors - a very important life skill. A representative from England Netball ran a netball session on Thursday 27th July. The session focussed on working in teams and socialising as well as netball. We were also lucky enough to have a member of the Dogs Trust team come in to deliver special workshops that haven't been run in school before. A favourite visit is always the library bus which visited school on two separate occasions during holiday club. Children engaged in a workshop and story time as well as exploring what books the mobile library bus has to offer.

The surfing lesson was a huge hit and something we would definitely be keen to explore further in the future. A small group of KS2 children travelled to Longsands to take part in a surfing lesson led by instructors at Longsands Surf School. Some children had taken part in lessons before and for others, it was a brand-new experience. First, the children took part in a warmup then learned the key skills on land before hitting the waves! We were very proud to watch the group get stuck in and have a go, it was very impressive how well they picked up what they had been taught. Of course there were falls but they got straight back up, showing us what their wetsuits were there for!

The children will have many cherished memories as a result of the activities and time spent with their peers over the first four weeks of the summer holidays and we hope that we can continue to offer a similar programme next year, seeing more of our children attend and reap the benefits.

As with many of the things that goes on in school, it doesn't just happen overnight. We are very grateful to the staff who gave up part of their summer holiday in order to make holiday club happen, to the companies who also offered their time and resources to make the activities exciting for the children and to the HAF team who supported school in making an application for funding. Without either of these, it simply could not have been such a success.





What you said about the club.....

"My children enjoyed holiday club activities and spending time with friends and children from other year groups."

"Kids loved all the different activities. They came out happy each day. Great they got to choose what they wanted to do and had just a variety."

"My child had such a great time that he didn't even like the weekend. As his going to the holiday club increased his self-confidence and he loved the school more..Big thanks"



Year 4 visit to Northumberland Zoo

Earlier this term, Year 4 enjoyed an exciting day at the zoo. English work this Autumn has included a unit on writing a balanced argument. The children had researched information about zoos for this unit and a great way of doing this was to visit an excellent local zoo. The children had spent some time examining the arguments for and against zoos and this visit allowed the children to see a zoo at first hand. This unit of work provided exciting learning and involved some stimulating discussions and produced some wonderful work in the form of a balanced argument about the future of zoos. Prior to this, each child wrote a non-chronological report about an animal they had chosen to research.

The visit to Northumberland country Zoo gave the children the opportunity learn about how a zoo works in practice as well as seeing the animals in the flesh. This broadened the learning that the children had undertaken in class, by providing a real experience of the zoo and its animals. The children were thrilled to see the animals for themselves, particularly enjoying the snow leopards and the alpacas. A real interest was stirred by the Scottish wildcats, who, although looking just like a domesticated cat, we were reliably informed would “have your finger off” if you got too close.

One of the highlights of the day was a visit to the Animal Theatre. Here, Year 4 got to see a magnificent collection of birds of prey. These exciting aerial predators kept the children on their toes, especially the owls which kept swooping low over our heads as we sat watching the show. The staff at the zoo were helpful, informative and equipped with many exciting facts and information about the animals that they care for. They were only too happy to take time to answer the many questions the children had about the animals, their diet and habitat. At the end of the day, it was lovely when the zoo guides remarked that it had been a pleasure to guide the children of St. Stephen's, who were enthusiastic and well-behaved throughout the day.





Year 1 visit to the Rising Sun Country Park

In November, Year 1 went on a lovely trip to the rising sun country park as part of our science topic, as we have been learning all about animals. This term, Year 1 have been learning about different types of animals, the different groups that animals belong to, what animals eat and where animals live. As soon as we arrived, we met the fantastic outdoor leaders at rising sun, and the children learned about animals that hibernate for winter. We then went on a nature walk, walking through all the crunchy autumn leaves and noticing the change in the season and weather. Once we arrived at the woods, we spent some time gathering interesting leaves, twigs and bark to create some art. After tucking into our packed lunches we ended our visit with a mini beast hunt, counting how many legs each mini beast had and working together in teams to sort them into groups. Our favourite part was singing around the campfire and eating some yummy popcorn, before heading back to school on the bus.



Time Bandits in Year 6

During our first term of the year, children learned all about life during World War 2. They looked at the timeline of events leading up to World War 2 and significant events throughout the war. The children also studied rationing, evacuation, women's roles during World War 2 and more sensitive events such as The Holocaust.

At the start of this term, we welcomed the 'Time Bandits' into school for an exciting day to complement and bring our learning in history to life! The Time Bandits use living history and drama to teach our children about historical events; in particular, World War 2! During this session, the children focused on many aspects of World War 2, including; the build up to war, the rise of fascism and how Britain prepared for the war. The Time Bandits also provided the children with an air-raid simulation where they were exposed to the sounds of bombs falling and explosions, as well as having to deal with some casualties! They discussed what the aftermath of an air raid would be like - they had to treat the injured, identify the dead and information gather about what had happened.

Pupils were able to learn so much from the practical and hands-on approach of the session. They had the opportunity to get hands-on with war time artefacts and asked questions which guided very thoughtful and mature discussions. We all had a fantastic day!



Traditional tales in Early Years

Nursery and Reception's autumn topic has been 'Once Upon a Time.' They have enjoyed learning about the traditional tales; The Three Little Pigs, Goldilocks and the Three Bears and The Gingerbread Man.

To maximise the potential for children's learning across all areas of learning, experiences and activities have been planned and linked to these three stories. The continuous provision areas in the unit have been resourced to reinforce the learning, and to stimulate children's enjoyment and understanding of the traditional tales.

The role play area has been transformed into the three little pigs' houses, the three bears' cottage and a gingerbread house linked to The Gingerbread Man story. The small world area was developed to encourage children to retell and act out the stories using puppets and props. Children have loved reading a range of traditional tales in the cosy reading area, using the puppets and story maps to bring their imaginative play to life.

In literacy, children have been retelling the traditional tales orally, pictorially and in writing. They have made story maps and porridge, written lists, labels and recipes. Using their developing phonics skills, the children have labelled diagrams of bears and pigs, written story sentences and traced words linked to story events and characters.



In literacy, children have been retelling the traditional tales orally, pictorially and in writing. They have made story maps and porridge, written lists, labels and recipes. Using their developing phonics skills, the children have labelled diagrams of bears and pigs, written story sentences and traced words linked to story events and characters.

Parents' Stay and Play

Thank you to all the parents and family members who joined us for our first stay and play session this term. The activities were all based around Goldilocks and the Three Bears and the children excitedly gave their parents a guided tour of the unit and loved showing them their favourite places to work. They thought it was funny getting their parents messy in the porridge oats, and enjoyed cutting out the story characters and making their own teddy bear designs.



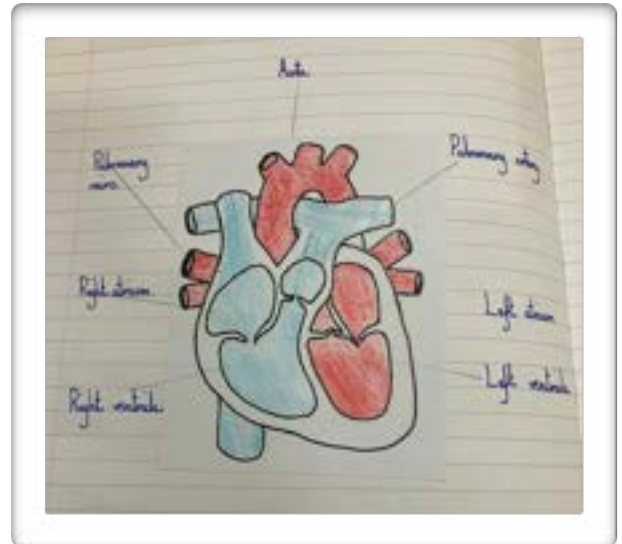
Biology in Year 6

Year 6 were lucky enough to welcome the the Head of Biology, staff and eight Biology students, some of whom were ex-pupils, from St Mary's into school to demonstrate and support them with dissecting a heart! This is how it went.....

In Science, Year 6 have been studying the circulatory system and children have been learning how organs and vessels transport blood around the body. They have learned the different parts of the heart, the main blood vessels leading to and from the heart and how oxygen and carbon dioxide is transferred in the lungs. To help reinforce the learning, and add a practical element, it was decided that a closer look at the heart was needed, which is why St Mary's High School Biology department were invited in.

When St Mary's teachers and students arrived, the first job was to set up learning stations in the hub as we needed a lot of room and plenty of ventilation! One of the advantages of getting St Mary's to help us was that they could provide the specialist specialist dissection equipment needed for the work ahead. However, before the children got to the practical work, they had a recap on what they already knew about the heart before the Biology teacher showed children the structures of the heart including ventricles, atriums and even the heart strings.

She then moved on to demonstrate how to carefully dissect it, which was fascinating and required a steady hand. The children observed that the left side of the heart muscle is bigger and stronger as it is needed to pump blood round the whole body!



After the thorough demonstration, the children got to work carefully and methodically using the equipment to dissect the heart. The high school students were not only a calming influence during the practical work, but were also brilliant at helping the children build their learning by asking them lots of questions. This really helped reinforce our children's knowledge and understanding. The whole experience was extremely valuable and enjoyable for our pupils. We are very grateful to St Mary's for the help and support they provided. Who knows, we might have some budding surgeons in the making.....



Meet the staff

Miss Lightfoot

Year 1

Nickname: Lighty

Born: Newcastle

Family: Mam, Dad and little brother

Education: Northumbria University

Favourite book: Zog, Julia Donaldson

Favourite film: Nativity

Favourite holiday destination: Cyprus

Favourite subject at school: English

Proudest moment: The day I graduated from university.

Biggest inspiration: My Dad.

If you weren't a teacher, what would you be? Cabin Crew

What would you sing at Karaoke? Valerie- Amy Winehouse

McDonald's or Burger King? McDonald's

Dog or Cat? Dog

Newcastle or Sunderland? Newcastle

What's the most daring thing you've done? Ghyll Scrambling at High Borran

If you could have one superpower, what would it be? Go back in time

Biggest fear? Moths

Tell us a joke.... What do you call a deer with no eyes? No eye deer, what do you call a deer with no eyes and no legs? Still no eye deer



Hello message from our new parents and teacher association (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. The first full meeting of the PTA will take place at 3.30pm on Thursday 26th January and all parents are welcome to attend, so please come along if you can to share your ideas and priorities for the group. 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 meeting in January. 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 and Laura (PTA Committee members).

Year 3 visit to Plessey Woods

In November, Year 3 went to Plessey Woods to take part in a geography fieldwork day. As part of our learning in geography this half term, Year 3 have been learning about the uses of maps and how they can help us navigate our way to different places. We can use the features and landmarks, as well as the OS symbols, to help us. We met with a park ranger who gave us a Halloween Trail to begin, in groups. We had to make sense of the map by working out where our starting location was. We could then begin to piece together a short route, ensuring that we went to each and every location to find the different clues on our journey. We used compasses to identify North, East, South and West. This helped us with working out which direction we needed to travel.





SPORTS NEWS



It has been another busy term of sport with the children taking part in a variety of different lessons and clubs in school. In addition to this, a number of children have had the opportunity to represent the school in a variety of different sports at tournaments and competitions across the borough and beyond.

Our Football Team have started the year very strongly with some very competitive and comprehensive performances. Opening fixtures saw league wins against St Bartholomew's (8-1) and Amberley (5-2). These wins were followed up with victories against Benton Dene (4-2) Following this, Holystone Primary were next up and after going in at half time two down, the team showed great resilience in a second half which saw them run out as 3-2 winners. Although still early in the season, and now in the winter break, the team sit proudly at the top of the league and are looking comfortable favourites at this stage.



They continued this strong form in the Bishop's cup with wins against St Vincent's (2-0) Sacred Heart (3-0) and St Cuthbert's, Kenton. (4-0). As a result, they have progressed to

the next round with ties to be played after Christmas. The Bishop's cup is a fabulous diocesan competition with teams from as far afield as Berwick to Teeside taking part.

The final fixtures before the winter break were in English Schools National tournament where the team competed in the regional qualifiers at Valley Gardens Middle School. After a comfortable 4-0 win against Cullercoats Primary School, the team tasted defeat for the first time this season, going down 2-0 to Valley Gardens in what was a frustrating game. Despite dominating for long spells, they just couldn't find a way through a stubborn Valley Gardens defence who went on to win and progress to the next round.

The girls team opened their season with a tough game against New York Primary School. For many of the girls, it was their first taste of competitive football and, against a well drilled New York team, it was always going to be difficult. Despite their best efforts, the game ended in a 4-1 defeat.

However, the disappointment was short lived as they won their next two games against Byker Primary School and Ivy Road 5-0 and 5-2 respectively.

As a result of the two wins, and plenty goals, the girls team are currently sitting second in the league.

The Northern Cross cup saw the team travel to St Aloysius where two wins and draw were more than enough to see them progress to the next round.



Sports Hall athletics

Our Year 6 children had the opportunity to represent our school in a Sportshall Athletics event, held at the Parks Leisure Centre, North Shields. They competed in a variety of events such as: hurdles, sprinting events, relay racing and also field events such as throwing and jumping events as well as agility and balance events. The competition allowed for the children to not only compete against the three other schools present (Stephenson Memorial, Christ Church, and Forest Hall) at the event but also against various other schools from North Tyneside, due to their times and

distances being measured. The children, when not competing, offered great support and encouragement for their classmates, which resulted in everyone enjoying the experience. The children all performed brilliantly and regardless of where they finished, competed to the best of their ability and in a competitive but sportsman like manner.



Cross Country



This year brought about the return of our school's entry into the NSAA Cross Country competition. The event was hosted at Temple Park in South Shields, which provided the children with a challenging course. The school entered a mixed team of pupils from Year 4 to Year 6 in a competition made up from 42 schools. Each race consisted of about 100 children on a very challenging course.

Throughout the competition, our children performed really well and showed great resilience and determination in completing the course. I should be noted that many of those competing were also club runners outside of school which gave them a bit of an edge in terms of experience and knowing what to expect.

All our children gave a good account of themselves and, as well as a great team performance, there were some excellent individual displays with Leo J finishing 3rd and Sean T finishing 10th. Well done to everyone who competed.

Overall, it's been a great term for sport in our school with lots of clubs and tournaments to enjoy as well as the work we do in Physical Education and with Newcastle United Foundation.





Newcastle United Academy



As part of their PE sessions, Year 5 and 6 had the opportunity to work with Newcastle United Academy to develop their skills. The children worked closely with Darren Darwent, who is the Head of Education at the academy, and his assistant, George Scott along with groups of trainees over several weeks in school before spending time at the academy itself. When youngsters join the academy on a fun time basis, they follow an educational or vocational pathway. As such, many of the trainees must study for their coaching qualifications and to this they need people to coach.....enter our children.



Because our school is in very close proximity to Newcastle's training ground and a couple of 'connections' we have, we are lucky, and very happy, to welcome the trainees into school and coach our children over 6 weeks worth of sessions each year.



This arrangement has been in place for a number of years now and there are many Newcastle trainees who have graced our school field who have gone on to make full professional debuts for Newcastle or other clubs in the football league. These include Adam Armstrong, Eliot Anderson, Matty and Sean Longstaff, Dan Barlas, Jay Turner-Cooke (scored in recent tour to Saudi) Dylan Stephenson among others.

As you would expect, the children had a great time and made the most of every opportunity. Their favourite part of the programme was definitely the

day they went up to the training ground and used the same facilities as their favourite players use each day.



Year 3 Advent Residential to The Sill in Northumberland



On the 6th and 7th of December, Year 3 took part in their first overnight residential trip to the YHA at the Sill. One of the reasons we arranged this trip for December was to celebrate the festive period of Advent. Whilst at the Sill, the children took part in a beautiful Liturgical Prayer whereby we reflected on the Word of God by sharing our recipes for a peaceful Christmas. We wrote prayers that we would like to share with word leaders about bringing people together at this special time of year and spreading God's Good News with all. We discussed that whilst Advent is a time for preparation, it is also a good time to be reflective, thankful, appreciative and kind to others who are less fortunate than ourselves. We decorated our Focal Area with prayers of thanks to our loved ones for all they do for us, not just during Advent, but each and every day.



Our day at the Sill consisted of a range of different activities, including a visit to Tyne Riverside Country Park in Newburn. We used our map-reading skills that we had learnt in geography to navigate our way around the park, finishing our adventure with a Reindeer Hunt in the woods! There were reindeers hidden all around the park, each representing a different letter. In small groups, our job was to record the different letters and then solve the anagram. After lots of hard work and discussion, some groups finally began to crack the code! The special message of the day was to love one another.



The fun certainly did not stop at Riverside Country Park as we had lots more exciting things planned at the Sill. Our afternoon consisted of an assortment of different craft activities. The children made beautiful Christmas cards, Advent wreaths and even decorated a tea light holder. We hope that the children can light their tea light over the festive period and many more festive periods to come, to remind themselves of our fantastic trip and the special memories that we made.



The Sill is set in beautiful surroundings located a short walk away from Hadrian's Wall and within a very peaceful dark skies area. We braved the cold night by wrapping up warm and heading outside with our torches to see what we could find. We found a quiet spot within the grounds of the Sill where we turned off our torches and stood quietly whilst we looked up at the sky and absorbed all of the different sounds. We were overwhelmed with a star full of skies and could not believe how bright the moon was! It was a lovely moment to stop and take advantage of the wonderful setting in which we were staying for the night. We are so proud of Year 3 for their first experience overnight with school. The staff at the gift shop at the Sill commented on how polite, well-mannered, and patient the children were when they were choosing and paying for their keepsakes. Well done Year 3, you were all fantastic!



Year 6 Discovery Museum visit

On Tuesday 6th December, Year 6 visited the Discovery Museum as part of their history work on World War 2.....

When we arrived, we took part in the first of three workshops led by the museum staff. We worked in groups to plan a weeks' worth of meals - the only problem being that the ingredients were in very short supply in the 'ration shop'. After some culinary creativity, we all managed to complete our plans but we unanimously agreed that meal-planning back then was an absolute art!



The second part of the day was a fact-finding mission; each group was provided with a range of sources which we analysed to identify the events that had occurred. We found out that many areas of Newcastle were bombed during the war, including a lemonade factory in North Shields. We ended the session by taking on the role of newsreaders and presented our reports to the rest of the class.

After a well-earned lunch break, we completed the third workshop; exploring and identifying a range of authentic artefacts.

Overall, we had a fantastic day and returned to school full of new ideas, inspiration and a much better idea about what life would have been like during the war.



Newcastle Cathedral Choir return to St Stephen's

We were delighted to welcome back the Newcastle Cathedral Choir to school this year to deliver their outreach programme with Year 3 and 4. Miss Oldfield from the Cathedral Choir led a series of sessions focusing on vocal control and the importance of warming our voices up for singing. The children learnt some festive songs that we were delighted to sing at our annual Carol Service. In 2023, we are hoping to take part in a performance with other schools in the region at Newcastle Cathedral.

Not forgetting our own choir too.....

Let me introduce you to the St. Stephen's School Choir!! We are VERY excited to announce that Mrs Long has now reinstated the school choir. She was bowled over by the response, enthusiasm and love of singing and performing. Therefore, could not resist the opportunity to put singing and performing back on our weekly calendar where it belongs!

For those who attended our Christmas Carol Service this month, you were amongst the first people to hear our wonderful children sing. Their rendition of 'O, Holy Night', was not only reverent and solemn, but their beautiful singing voices sent shivers down our spines. Leaving many of you (and staff!) with not a dry eye. The children did not have long to learn and prepare this song and you wouldn't have known that. They did such a tremendous job - we were so proud of them all! Mrs Long is already compiling a list of songs and preparing something quite EXTRA for next year.

Our choir is open to all pupils in KS2 and we would love to expand! So, if you know your little one is interested in this wonderful opportunity, encourage them to come along to our rehearsals, on a Thursday lunchtime. We'd love to see more of the children there!

The staff are so excited to finally have our school choir back up and running and CANNOT wait for you to see what is to come! So, keep your eyes peeled....





Remembrance Service 2022

Our whole school gathered together on Friday 11th November to pay our respects and remember the brave men and women who have sacrificed their lives in conflicts around the world, not least 'The Great War' from 1914-1918. As well as prayers, readings, poems and hymns, stories of individuals were shared. The children heard how men and women played various roles throughout the war effort, however, different their roles, their experiences were equally harrowing.

Year 6 led our service and were extremely reverent and moving as children, staff and governors came together in unity with the nation in an act of remembrance. Next term, the children in Year 5 will continue their learning about Word War 1, as it forms part of our curriculum in History. It is hugely important that, as a school, we mark such events as it is extremely important in helping the children develop an understanding and appreciation of the sacrifices made by people during conflict both past and present.



Nourish Food School

As you will be aware, over the last academic year, St. Stephen's Primary School have been fortunate enough to be part of a huge NHS project, whereby our school will form part of an 'Integrated Healthcare Hub.' The primary focus of this project is exploring opportunities to support and develop both our pupils and their families, physical health, mental health and wellbeing, as well as promoting healthy diet and nutrition.

Promoting healthy diet and nutrition is at the heart of our project. Ensuring that our pupils and families are readily equipped with the skills and knowledge to sustain and maintain a healthy diet and promote positive mental health and wellbeing. In a world where takeaway restaurants and fast foods are lining our local high streets and the cost-of-living increases, we feel that now is the perfect opportunity to support and develop lifelong skills which will enable our families to 'eat well for less'.

Joanna Lacey and her team of expert health and nutritionists, from Nourish Food School, worked alongside both KS1 and KS2 pupils and their parents in a cookery workshop. The focus of the workshops was not solely to learn how to cook a meal, rather, provide families with the skills and knowledge around food nutrition, making cost effective decisions when doing the 'weekly food shop', as well as learning how to batch cook low cost, yet delicious meals.

In addition to this, Joanna was keen to develop an awareness around the word 'nourish'. In that, it is not just a nice foodie word - it has a bigger meaning. This for Joanna is at the heart of Nourish Team's mission statement, whereby her team are focussed on the social purpose of mealtimes - bringing people together through the love of cooking and eating food! They are all about remembering that to 'nourish' is to provide tools needed to live, be healthy, develop or grow stronger. Food experiences create opportunities to do that for physical health, for mental health, for the health of a community or workplace and so much more.

The key principles of Nourish mission and vision statement complements beautifully what we here, at St. Stephen's, are trying to achieve, too.

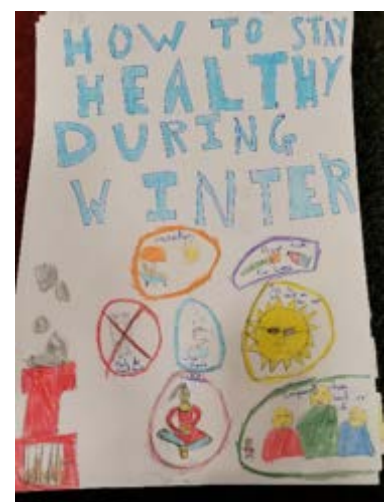


NHS Project

As part of the Integrated Health Care Hub project, we have been working closely with health professionals from Swarland Avenue GP Surgery. This half term, pupils were invited to produce information posters to be displayed in GP Practices

around Longbenton. The focus of these posters was to raise awareness around 'How to stay well in winter.' The pupils discussed various ways to look after themselves physically, but also how to look after their mental wellbeing, too. Many of the children's posters were selected by the Practice Manager and will be displayed in many of GP surgeries around the Longbenton area. To say thank you for the children's hard work, Swarland GP Surgery, kindly made a £200 donation to St. Stephen's. Our Agents for Change are busy deciding on how best to spend this wonderful donation!

Here's a sneak peek of some of the selected posters that you might see around our local area. Well done everyone.....



Agents for Change

Following class elections, our new Agents for Change were appointed and began their first term in office! The children were so excited to be given such a rewarding role and couldn't wait to get started. We all met together to introduce ourselves and talked about what we were looking forward to in the coming year. One of our first important jobs was to be ambassadors for our school and help to deliver Harvest Festival donations to The People's Kitchen in Newcastle. We were able to hear about all of the fantastic work that the volunteers do and we were inspired to help people in our community in different ways. We then helped to raise money for The Royal British Legion by collecting donations and handing out poppies in school. As pupil voice is so important to us here at St. Stephen's, our new Agents for Change have already come up with some fantastic ideas for the new year - this includes pupil surgeries, community projects, improving and enhancing our prayer garden and working hard towards obtaining a CAFOD LiveSimply award. Watch this space!



Going above and beyond at Christmas

We know that Christmas can be a very difficult time for many people and, as we have journeyed through Advent, we have spoken about this with our children. As mentioned in the earlier article, our Agents for Change are keen to embark on several projects so we can do something to help, whether it be supporting Cafod, local charity groups, food banks and shoe box schemes. Such appeals are always met with huge generosity by our school community and it is truly heartwarming to witness and be part of. It also demonstrates that our children are developing a strong sense of social justice and a desire to help others. As a school we are always keen to broker and support any activities which give our children the chance to make a difference.

However, it has come to our attention that some children have really gone above and beyond in their own time to make a difference!

One story came about, purely by chance, after scrolling through Facebook and looking at The People's Kitchen page..... We knew Harry had raised money in the past but this was amazing and a truly wonderful gesture from Harry and his family. Typically, Harry hadn't mentioned a thing about this!

Another story of goodwill and charitable works came via an email into school telling us that Khloe and Kaylan Amune had produced a video appeal seeking donations to support Norah's North Pole Initiative, which the school had been supporting. With the help of their parents, they reached out to friends and family and raised over £300 for the appeal, which helps provide children with presents at Christmas. Again, what a truly remarkable gesture of kindness.



To Harry, Khloe and Kaylan, a huge well done and thank you for all your kindness and generosity of spirit; You're actions are truly inspirational!

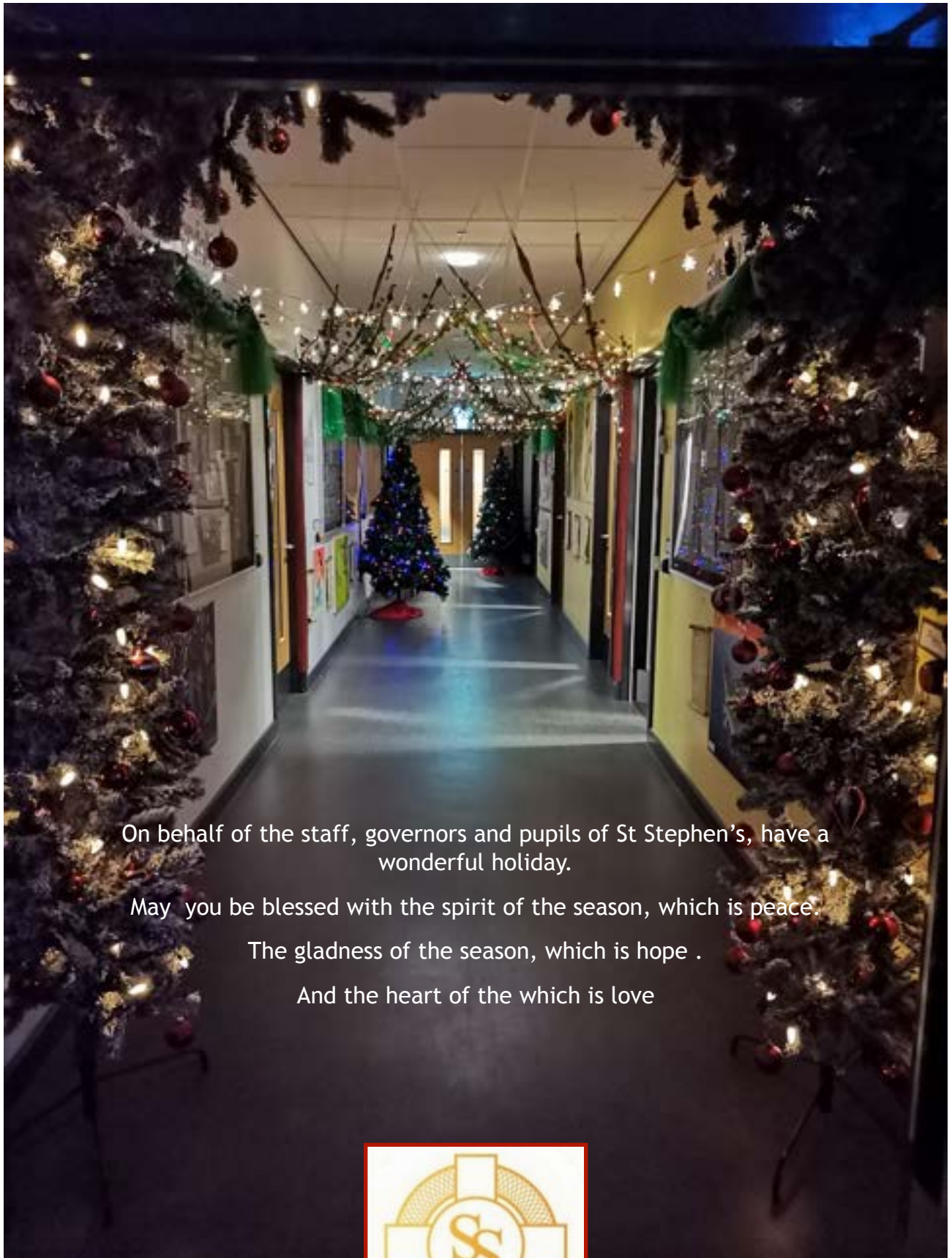
Christmas celebrations

Our Christmas celebrations in school have been fabulous. It all started with our journey through Advent which saw some lovely services taking place in school and church, leading to our annual carol service and nativity services. As we moved towards the end of term, our celebrations have included parties, visits to the pantomime, visits from Mrs Claus and Santa himself as well as our Christmas parties in school. The school has looked wonderful with the all the decorations and lights..... all thanks to our resident Christmas fanatic Mrs Long!!!









On behalf of the staff, governors and pupils of St Stephen's, have a wonderful holiday.

May you be blessed with the spirit of the season, which is peace.

The gladness of the season, which is hope .

And the heart of the which is love



