NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

Maiie’s Amazing Fundraising Effort

Last term Maisie Hancock, a year 6 pupil at Broxbourne Primary, decided to hold a cake sale to raise money for Princess Alexandra Hospital, and collected a staggering £570. Maisie specifically wanted to use the funds to make the nurses’ lives easier or happier. The money raised was enough to buy personalised hoodies for the whole nursing team, including staff within the neighbouring paediatric ambulatory unit. The hoodies feature a rainbow NHS design as a sign of hope and brightness in the midst of the year’s struggles. Each hoodie was personalised with the trust logo, department and each nurse’s name.

Everyone at Broxbourne Primary is incredibly proud of Maisie for the initiative and service she has shown to others and the difference she has made.

‘Tomorrow Will be a Good Day’

Over these last months of uncertainty, the children of Marston Moretaine have been lucky enough to be living next door to their very own superhero. Along with so many others, they have watched as Captain Tom, in his quiet dignity and compassion, showed them how to live out their school values – to take positive action to help others in a time of need. As pupils worked, played, sang and danced, right next to them Captain Tom walked and walked and walked. Looking on, they saw an elderly gentleman slowly marking the laps, but in their minds they knew that they were being set an example of the very best that they can be.

Recently, Marston Moretayne School received two very special benches which have taken pride of place in their playgrounds. They are a memorial to the school’s neighbour, Captain Sir Tom Moore. He has inspired the children throughout lockdown with his kindness and resilience. An inscription simply reads ‘The bench of resilience and kindness in memory of Captain Tom’.

Fantastic Friday at Cranfield

To celebrate the return to school and give children and staff at Cranfield CE Academy a much needed boost of motivation, the school enjoyed a superb Fantastic Friday on 26 February. Virtual visits from Mr Motivator himself, two award-winning authors, ‘Spread the Happiness’ & ‘Dough Disco’ founder Shonette Bason-Wood and Magic Dave gave children a wonderful day of motivation and memories. Appearing on local BBC and ITV news certainly made the day that little more exciting. Life in all its fullness, via Zoom perhaps!

Vacancies Webpage

The Vacancies page on the diocesan website gives you an additional platform to advertise job openings in your school free of charge. Do send any vacancy advertisements to hpuddefoot@stalbans.anglican.org

Nash Mills Make the Most of Nature

At Nash Mills Primary this term, the school has been making use of the outdoors; providing pupils and staff with the opportunity to explore how they use it and how they can appreciate what they have. Children have spent time building dens and carrying out team-based activities. They have studied natural art and learnt more about the local plants and animals that live around the school site. Older pupils have also had the opportunity to discreetly discuss the spirituality of being in the natural world, the impact it has on them and its importance to them as a community.

‘You’ve Got a Friend’

During the latest lockdown, Pulford Lower had approximately 30% of their children in school, coming from the homes of keyworkers and vulnerable children, with the all other pupil learning from home. The teaching staff made sure to keep connected to all their pupils during this time by having daily chats with their classes to see the wonderful things that they were doing at home.

Mrs Borrelli and Mrs Gunter worked hard to put together a fantastic video of the work produced by the children, presented to the sound of Mrs Borrelli singing “You’ve got a friend”, which was shown to the children in the school’s Collective Worship.
Codicote’s Operation Christmas Card!

After such a challenging year for everyone, Codicote Primary has been so impressed with the sense of community in the school that they decided they would like to share the love and friendship with the village, and the concept of Operation Christmas Card was born! The idea was to deliver a card from the children and staff to each house in the village - 1,200 in all. Everyone was up for the challenge, and the planning and plotting began.

Firstly, every child made a heart. These were then assembled to make a Christmas tree design for the card. They agreed on a message to go inside, and a label for the envelopes.

Meanwhile, with their excellent local knowledge, the Year 6 children helped to allocate delivery streets to classes, with the youngest children going to the nearest addresses and the older children allocated the harder routes.

When all of the envelopes had been filled and labelled, the school ‘elves’ set off to deliver Christmas cheer. The response was amazing. The school received emails, letters, phone calls and Christmas cards from so many people expressing their appreciation – not just for the cards, but also to say how much they had enjoyed hearing and seeing the children around the village again. People were calling ‘Thank you!’ to them from their windows and doors – even dogs were waving with their paws! It was truly humbling; from a simple desire to share some happiness and bring a smile to people’s faces, their generous response to the children was amazing.

Keeping Music Alive at Welwyn St Mary’s

Music is a huge part of Welwyn St Mary’s School, and everyone had all been missing hearing their choirs sing during the pandemic.

Their music subject leader, Emma Harrison, had the idea of putting together a virtual recording, featuring past and present members of the school choir.

Each child learnt the tune at home, listened to a piano accompaniment on headphones, and recorded themselves singing their parts, which was crucial for them to learn accurately as the finished recording was in 2-part harmony.

Each individual audio recording was emailed to Mrs Harrison, and the voices were then layered to form a virtual recording.

The newly formed WSM Alumni Choir went on to learn another piece (a challenge as this one was in 4-part harmony): a beautiful composition entitled Wide Open Spaces - rather apt for the return to school and slight easing of lockdown restrictions!

Welwyn St Mary’s are very proud of the efforts of these young musicians who are helping to keep music alive at their school.

‘Jesus is Light’ Candle Message

St Nicholas Primary School in Harpenden created a ‘Jesus is Light’ message out of candles in jars for their end-of-term Christmas service. Normally, the whole school service would be held in St Nicholas Church, but this year it was replaced by a short outdoor service for each class in the playground.

‘Do Something that Makes you Smile’

The children of St Andrew’s Primary in Much Hadham were invited to ‘do something that makes you smile’ on Wednesday afternoons during the January/February 2021 lockdown. Suggested activities included baking a cake, building a creation out of junk materials and going for a bike ride. ‘Wheely Wednesday’ was particularly popular with the children at school in the key worker ‘Pod’. The picture shows some of the children in the EYFS/Y1 ‘Podlet’ enjoying their wheels!

Dan’s Den

At the end of last term, Northaw CE Primary School welcomed +Michael, Bishop of Hertford to the grand opening of ‘Dan’s Den’.

The funds for the appropriately named gazebo, beautifully crafted by Edspace Ltd, were generously donated by Dan and Chris Ruge-Cope. Dan, who has been a long-standing member of the school’s Governing Body for over 10 years, said that he was proud to be part of Northaw School.

This thoughtful gift was a beautiful, big-hearted gesture to the school, especially during the difficult times of the past year.

Head Teacher Mrs Whales said that the children would enjoy Dan’s Den in all seasons for many years to come, and Bishop Michael commented that the grand opening was a salute to everything that Dan has given in faithful and loving service to Northaw parish and school over many years.

St Nicholas’ Mothers Day Stall

Year 5 at St Nicholas’ Primary in Stevenage organised, planned and led a whole school Mother’s Day stall. They created posters, ensured they had donations, made tags, decorated paper bags and ran the stall. They raised an amazing £440 for charities, including the Captain Tom Moore Foundation, the cancer and children’s wards at Lister Hospital and the Garden House Hospice.
A Thank You to St John’s Parish, Digswell

Simon Horleston, Head Teacher at St John’s Primary, reflects on the past year and thanks the Parish of St John’s, Digswell for their support:

“This past year has been a challenging year on so many levels. There are too many real-life superheroes to mention who have supported the school in being the best possible version of ourselves. When reflecting on the year that has been, one thing that stands out to me is how no one within the school has used it as an excuse to stand still or for low expectations. We have continued to thrive and grow as a school. We would really like to thank the Parish of Digswell and our wider community for the role they have played in praying for each and every one of us. The YouTube assemblies have been fantastic and although for the majority we have been apart, we feel more strongly connected than ever before. A big thank you to Father Rob and to Selina for everything that you do for the school. The recent visit to our Year 6s for the Stations of the Cross was a great success – we would have loved to be in the church for this, but your flexibility and commitment to the school have been ever so heart-warming.”

Vincent Van Gogh Inspired Art at Wilden

During lockdown, Squirrel Class at Wilden Primary School learnt about Vincent Van Gogh and tried to replicate his sunflower painting. The children used all different types of materials to create their own and the results were fantastic!

Eucharistic Prayers at Weston

At Weston Primary, Years 4-6 have been writing their own version of the Eucharistic Prayer. Below is a prayer written by Emma, in Year 6:

God our Father, we thank you for being with us through the hard times and for giving us this life.
We give thanks and praise to you.
Glory be to God, for he is the Father.
We know you love us and we respect your love.
You sent Jesus to show us how to love and see the world properly.
We give thanks and praise for your love and showing us how to love.
Glory be to God, for he is the Father.
You gave us food, you gave us water, you gave us air to breathe.
How do we repay you for all our sins.
We praise your forgiveness and thank your mercy.
Glory be to God, for he is the Father.
For listening, helping, caring, healing, loving and forgiving we give thanks and praise to you, our Father.
Glory be to God, for he is the Father.

‘Love Has Seen Us Through’

During lockdown, St Augustine’s Academy in Dunstable found encouragement through their daily Collective Worship and peace through their mindfulness activities. Now, back at school, children are valuing being with their friends and enjoying frequent visits to their Forest School, as well as fresh air and exercise.

The school has spent time reflecting on the past year but has also thought about their hopes going forward. Recently, children came to school dressed as heroes from the pandemic. One little girl wore a beautiful heart jumper and touched everyone at school with her words by saying, “I have come dressed as love because love has seen us through.” There are no truer words than that.

Golden Heart of Hope

To mark National Day of Reflection on 23 March, every child and member of staff at Hertingfordbury Cowper Primary planted a daffodil to make a golden heart. They wanted to give the message of new beginnings and better times to come. The school community look forward to their golden heart blooming into full colour every springtime.
**Focus on Governance**

"Why must we complete a new application form and get formal approval from the appointing body, just to renew an appointment for another term of office? Can't our foundation governor simply continue automatically for another four years?"

I am currently reviewing a number of foundation appointments that have expired, and this question is one that is often asked. Here's an explanation of the legal reasons for a fresh application process every four years.

Foundation governor terms of office cannot be renewed without a new application form and formal approval from the appointing body. This is because C of E schools are 'exempt charities' (that is, they are charities regulated by the DfE rather than the Charity Commission). As exempt charities, their governors or directors are deemed charity trustees and therefore these appointments come under charity law.

This includes a legal requirement for a candidate 'self-declaration' that they are not disqualified from serving as a charity trustee/governor. This declaration, along with the appointing body’s formal approval, lasts for a single term of office – because personal circumstances may change. Once a term of office expires, the appointment process starts again from scratch. Our application form includes this essential declaration along with the declaration to support the school’s Christian ethos, which is also a requirement for a foundation governor.

Clerks may be unfamiliar with the legal requirement for church school governor self-declarations if they have previously clerked for maintained community schools, where self-declaration is no longer statutory (though it is still considered good practice). There is full guidance on foundation appointments processes, along with the application form, on our website: [www.stalbans.anglican.org/schools/governance](http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/schools/governance). We are very happy to advise on any appointments queries not covered there.

**Belinda Copson**
Governance Officer
We wish you all a blessed and relaxing Easter break.

Virtual Candle Wall

*Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”* - John 8:12

The lighting of a candle can hold many meanings; it illuminates darkness, represents a prayer and acts as a reminder of the presence of Christ, light of the world. We can now offer you an online space to add a virtual candle to the gallery. You can access this by clicking the link below.

www.stalbans.anglican.org/schools/virtual-candle-wall-schools

Easter Message

As the term draws to a close, I carry with me, as I know you do, a sense of deep tiredness, a weariness of the soul, not just the body. Encounters over the past twelve months have both inspired and exhausted us and it is time to rest.

Encounters can be with individuals, groups or with places—locations that we know, love and often retreat to.

Robert Macfarlane in his book, *The Wild Places*, recognises and celebrates the impact that particular encounters with the landscape can have on peoples lives. A mountain top, a cairn, a deep valley, a waterfall. He goes on to say:

‘These were the markers, I realised, of a process that was continuously at work throughout these islands, and presumably throughout the world: the drawing of happiness from landscapes both large and small. Happiness, and the emotions that go by the collective noun of ‘happiness’: hope, joy, wonder, grace, tranquility and others. Every day, millions of people found themselves deepened and dignified by their encounters with particular places.’ (Macfarlane, Robert, *The Wild Places* (p. 234), Granta, Kindle Edition.)

I was really struck by the words he associated with happiness; hope, joy, wonder, grace and tranquility.

As you enter the Easter break, which has resurrection at its heart, may you find hope, joy, wonder, grace and tranquility and draw happiness from each encounter.

David Morton
Director of Education

‘In Conversation With…’

The Schools Team have started producing an ‘In Conversation With…’ series of videos which presents interviews with experienced practitioners in the world of collective worship. Supplementing each video is a ‘top tip and take-away’ resource, providing think-pieces, signposts and questions to reflect on in school. These can be found on our website at: www.stalbans.anglican.org/schools/collective-worship where new videos will be uploaded regularly.

Schools Team Twitter Account

Do follow us on Twitter at @stalbansdioedu

Headteacher Changes

A warm welcome to our new substantive headteachers and heads of school this term: Andrew Brown, Norton St Nicholas Primary and Colette Lamb, Toddington St George School

Our thanks and best wishes for the future accompany Wendy-May Foster, who is leaving Park Street Primary

Our appreciation also goes to all those who have, or are about to, step in as interim or acting heads.

Living God’s Love in Education: Enabling Life in all its Fullness

Distinctively Christian ● Community Focused ● Serving the Common Good

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