



Dear Parents/Carers,

Well we've made it to half term and what a fun way to finish it, with a fantastic sponsored 'run a mile' event. A HUGE thank you for your support with this PTFA event. What a wonderful half term it has been and so fantastic to be all back together in an 'almost normal' school. Until we have further guidance we will remain in our bubbles and follow the health and safety guidelines. I will update you immediately of any changes as they happen.

We know what an important half term is coming up after the break - the preparation of the transition for all pupils into the next year group. We'll have new pupils starting in our Foundation class and Pre-School and our wonderful Y6 pupils will be preparing for the next exciting part of their school careers. We are planning sessions to support these important moves and hope these will be allowed when further restrictions are lifted -more details to follow . We are also hoping to hold sports afternoons, in our bubbles, and will inform you nearer the time. I know that all of the Key Stage 2 classes have also organised day trips for next half term. Slowly but surely we are reaching the light at the end of what seems a very long tunnel. The impact of this pandemic has yet to be fully recognised but as a team we are determined to continue providing the very best teaching and learning experiences and opportunities for all our pupils. Our school 'strapline' has never been more poignant ... " Embracing Learning; Inspiring Ambition; Celebrating Individuality."

I hope you and your families have a relaxing and sunny half term together making new memories together. **We look forward to welcoming you all back on Tuesday 8th June.** Monday 7th June is a teacher training day.

Take care and stay safe.

Maura Furber

School Improvement

Last week Mrs. Hooper and I were delighted to meet with Mr. Neil Swait, our Trust Improvement Officer (TIO), to review children's writing and moderate our teacher assessment judgements.

Since our return from the second lockdown we have identified writing as a priority across the school to focus on.

Some key points from this visit include:

- * Leaders were well prepared for the moderation meeting, providing a range of writing evidence from English and topic books.
- * Evidence of pupils' independent writing was readily available and clearly highlighted.
- * Key areas of weakness in writing, as identified by school leaders due to the CV19 lockdowns, include pupils' ability to write at length and accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- * Leaders feel that pupils' use of rich and varied vocabulary has improved. The TIO agrees with this point. There is good evidence in books to demonstrate pupils use of more adventurous word choices to engage the reader.
- * Leaders report that pupils' attitudes to writing, since their full return to school on the 8th March, have been generally very positive.
- * Pupils are keen and ready to learn.

It was wonderful that our judgements and key priorities were agreed .This gives the staff team a secure point from which to review our Recovery Curriculum, identify next steps in provision and focus our support and teaching. Pupil voice has played a vital part in this school improvement.





Sponsored Run -A -Mile

What fantastic determination and stamina Team St Stephens showed this week. Trainers and sports kits on and they were off - even the rain couldn't stop them! From the youngest pupils in Pre-School to the oldest Year 6 pupils we are so proud of each and every one of them.

A HUGE thank you in advance for your amazing support . The sponsor money has yet to be counted and checked but we know it is going to make an enormous difference to the children. We will confirm the final amount ASAP -keep your eye on the PTFA noticeboard as you enter the school gate...



Physical well being has always been a priority for us and , as we returned from each lockdown , the importance became more apparent. A healthy body supports a healthy mind.

Our School Gardens

A massive THANK YOU to all the parents who have donated tools, wood, soil, wire and other items requested for our garden area. These really were needed - and now children can get gardening on a Tuesday lunchtime. Thank you. Poly-tunnel performances : Meet our band of musicians from Y4! We decided to use the garden and poly tunnels as a place to make music on a Tuesday lunchtime, to accompany the gardening work going on! The group is open to anyone in Y3/4 who would like to play or listen. Just bring your instrument and packed lunch on a Tuesday lunchtime to the garden area from 12:15 and play either on your own or with a friend.



Macbeth -Shakespeare In Action!

Y5 have been working on the latest Royal Shakespeare Company project, which this year takes the form of an online film festival. Over the past two weeks we have teamed up with Jo Mason and her drama group from College, to perform and film scenes showing the theme of 'mystery', from Macbeth.

We are using our amazing grounds at St Stephens as the set, as you can see in these photos. We have had some truly terrifying performances by children acting as the witches and ghosts from the play: this promises to be a spine-chilling performance! Well done Year Five!



Youth Council Planning a Well-Being Space for Y6

We are so immensely proud of our youth councillors. They have been busy measuring and planning the area outside their classroom to create a garden where they can sit, chat, have their lunch and relax. After looking at different ideas for benches and planters they worked together to independently write a letter to Homeleigh Garden Centre, asking for any plant donations they could spare. In the meantime, one of the group spoke to his grandmother with 'green fingers' and came up with a list of suitable plants for the area.

We contacted the garden centre to see if we could purchase some plants and were delighted that the owner, Mrs Broad, came to the telephone to praise the wonderful letter and ideas of the youth council. The outcome was a wonderful donation of summer bedding plants. Thanks to Meghan's grandad for collecting them for us. A huge well done to our councillors and an enormous thank you to our local community garden centre for their generosity.



If you have any shrubs, ornamental grasses or plants you could donate they would also be gratefully received. Thank you.

The next step is digging, clearing and planting!



Class 4 Physical Education Lessons

In P.E. we have been practicing our throwing and catching skills. We were catching as a pair using only one hand! We had to follow the ball with our eyes, listen carefully and concentrate. Team work was vital.



**Fruit Seed Challenge
In Class 7**



We had so much fun cutting fruit and vegetables to see if we could find seeds.

There was melon, water melon, tomatoes, apples, oranges, cucumber and pineapple.

The water melon was so heavy. We found lots of seeds- the melon and the pepper had lots.

The apple seeds made a pretty pattern. Some we had to look really carefully to find the seeds like the orange

Science in Class 5 .

Making Plastic from Milk!

For the last experiment of the Properties of Materials topic we decided to be creative. We made casein plastic from milk. This was popular between 1900 and 1945 and was used to make many things from combs to buttons and belt buckles. It was even used to make jewellery for Queen Mary. We predicted what we thought would happen when we combined the liquids and then observed the changes that occurred. We noted this was definitely an irreversible change. Once we had created it, we created our own keepsakes and when they have set we will take them home.



Who was your Lockdown Hero?



The Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Royal Mail announced on the 3rd April the launch of a stamp design competition for UK schoolchildren to mark the important role played by key and frontline workers, as well as others, during the pandemic. The competition will give children, aged 4 to 14, the chance to design an official Royal Mail stamp as part of a special set of eight. Children will be asked to think about who their hero or heroes are, and to design a stamp in their honour.

We thought this was a wonderful competition, so each child at St Stephens has been given the opportunity to design a new stamp featuring their Covid Heroes so we can honour their tremendous work.

Our Art Lead, Miss Callcut has co-ordinated this project and posted all the designs, so...

fingers

crossed everyone!



Bobby Hopkinson's

PRO20

SPORTS ACADEMY

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31st May - 4th June

Our Pro20 Football courses give children aged 5-14 years the opportunity to enjoy football in a safe and fun environment whilst having the opportunity to shine.

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