

'Be who God wants you to be and so set the world on fire.'

St. Catherine's Newsletter: Spring Term 1 2024



A Message From Mrs Quiligotti

Dear parents and carers,

It has been an exciting start to 2024 at St Catherine's with lots of fun-filled learning opportunities and theme weeks jam-packed into six weeks, including Storytelling Week, Children's Mental Health Week and Other Faiths Week. We've also had snow which, as you can imagine, brought great joy to our children!

As always, it has been a delight to put this newsletter together to celebrate all of the wonderful learning opportunities our fantastic children have been afforded. Our children in Early Years were bursting with excitement to tell me all about the dinosaurs who snuck into our school for a visit and our Year 2 children were even brave enough to hold some very interesting visiting creatures, including tarantulas and bearded dragons! We've been blessed with lots of visits already from our new school therapy dog, Harvey, who is making his way through school to meet our children. Harvey is a beautiful six-year-old golden retriever and he's been working very hard over the past year, alongside his owner Mrs Taylor, to complete his therapy dog training. Our children in KS2 have all met Harvey already and I'm especially enjoying Harvey having some quiet time in my office during his class visits.

We have celebrated Storytelling Week in January this year instead of March and we loved seeing so many of our children coming back into school for 'Bedtime Stories' in their pyjamas and enjoying their time relaxing in their classrooms listening to stories read by their teachers whilst munching on popcorn. We were so impressed with the many 'stories in a jar' that children created as well and we've loved celebrating these in school.

Children's Mental Health Week was another theme week we celebrated recently, with this year's focus being 'Our Voice Matters'. Class 11 led a beautiful worship to help us to reflect on the importance of our voice and how each of us matter. We've also been focusing on the 'Five Ways To Well-Being' to learn more about how we can support our own mental health and our children loved their well-being workshops too.

This week, our children in KS2 marked the start of Lent by attending the Ash Wednesday service with Father John in church, with our GIFT Team then leading reflections for our younger children and anointing them with ashes, just like our older children received in church.

We hope all of our families have a fantastic half-term and we look forward to welcoming everyone back to school on Monday 26th February.

Mrs Quiligotti

Love

Faith

Respect

Perseverance

Compassion

Inspiration

Whole School



This Half-Term...

This half-term has been filled with lots of excitement, including Storytelling Week, Children's Mental Health Week and Other Faiths Week. Many of our year groups have had some very special learning opportunities alongside these theme weeks too, including Ancient Greek Day in Year 4, Victorians Day in Year 5, a dinosaur visit in Early Years and a visit from a number of different animals in Year 2!

We loved celebrating The Epiphany in church with Father John and coming up with ideas of what gifts we would present to Jesus if we were the Three Kings visiting him after his birth. We also commemorated the start of Lent with our older children attending St. Catherine's Ash Wednesday service and our GIFT Team leading special services for our younger children to anoint them with ashes.



Harvey the School Therapy Dog

Harvey is a beautiful six-year-old golden retriever and he is Mrs Taylor's dog. Harvey and Mrs Taylor have been working hard over the past year to complete their training through Pets As Therapy so that Harvey can come into schools and work with children, including at St Catherine's! Each class will be having an initial 'meet and greet' session with Harvey to learn more about him, ask questions and have the opportunity to pet him if they wish. Harvey has already been into school to visit all of our KS2 classes and he will then be meeting our KS1 and EYFS classes over the next couple of months too.



Theme Weeks



Storytelling Week

We love Storytelling Week! We had another fantastic annual celebration of all things storytelling, from bedtime stories in our pyjamas with popcorn to sharing books with family members in class. Lots of our children created 'stories in a jar' which we've loved celebrating in school and our children loved their 'book swap' opportunity too!



Other Faiths Week

This half-term during Other Faiths Week, we have been learning all about Islam. Our children participated in an assembly led by Imran and they learnt lots about the faith of Islam, including the five pillars. Imran explained that Muslims believe in one God (Allah) and the prophet Muhammad, as well as lots of other interesting facts about the Islam faith.

Children's Mental Health Week

The theme of Children's Mental Health Week this year was 'My Voice Matters'. Our children loved taking part in their well-being workshops and loved their 'Dress to Express' day, raising money for mental health charities. We also focused on learning more about the 'five ways to well-being': connect; be active; take notice; learn new things; give.



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Nursery



This Half-Term...

This half-term in Nursery, our topic has been 'Polar and Pre-Historic Animals'! The snow earlier in January could not have been timed better. We had so much fun exploring the features of snow and building Sid the Snowman! We enjoyed learning about penguins through our focus text, 'I Can Fly' and about dinosaurs, through our focus text, 'Bumpus Rumpus Dinosaurumpus'.

We had a fantastic visit from Teach Rex, who brought Jam the dinosaur to meet all of the children and some baby dinosaurs too! I think the children are still searching for Roger...!

In Maths, we have been continuing to develop and secure our knowledge of numbers to 5. We have been learning the different ways we can make numbers too!

We have also loved many additional learning opportunities, such as enjoying Storytelling Week, where our grown-ups came into Nursery and read with us, Bedtime stories, learning about Lunar New Year and making dragons, our visit to Church and Stay and Play!

Our children say...

"We had popcorn and listened to stories in our pyjamas!"

"We saw lots of things in church. Stained glass windows and lots of crosses."

"It snowed! We made a snowman and watched what happened to it."



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Reception



This Half-Term...

This half-term, we have been learning about Arctic and pre-historic animals. We have been learning about cold places in the world and where Arctic animals live. We have also learnt about dinosaurs including their life cycles and how they differ from us.

In Literacy, we have listened to the stories 'The storm whale in winter' and 'How to grow a dinosaur.' We have had lots of fun creating story maps, acting out the stories and writing words and sentences.

In Maths, we have been learning how to subitise, link numerals to amounts and order length and height.

We have started going to Worship every Friday and we have enjoyed listening to the bible stories and being part of our school family. Lots of us have received golden jumpers and we are so proud of all our friends who have!

Our children say...

"Jam the dinosaur came into the hall. He was massive. We could tickle his chin."

"We talk about Jesus in Worship with Mrs Quiligotti. If you are good you get a golden jumper."

"We've learnt about Arctic animals. I like snowy owls the best."



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Year 1



This Half-Term...

In Topic this half-term, we have been focusing on our history unit and in particular Neil Armstrong. We have focused on why he is such a significant figure, his achievements and learnt all about space.

In Maths, we have been learning about place value and addition and subtraction. We have understood the difference between addition and subtraction and can use the symbols independently to make our own number sentences.

In Science, we have been focusing on animals including humans. We have learnt about our senses and used them in an experiment to help solve a missing teddy mystery!

This half-term, we have been focusing on developing our writing skills alongside reading our text, "The Lion Inside". We have continued focusing on capital letters and full stops and have begun making our writing even better by adding specific suffixes such as er, est and ed.

Our children say...

"I have loved learning about Neil Armstrong and want to be an astronaut when I grow up! I am going to go to all the planets!"

"When I grow up, I want to be a vet so I can help the animals we learnt about in Science, like spiders!"

"I liked in Religion when we talked about the special people in our lives because I have lots of people who love me."



Year 2



This Half-Term...

As part of our Science topic, we have been learning all about habitats and the adaptations that animals make. We had a visit from Animal UK where the children got to meet the following animals; a barn owl, a tenrec, a tortoise, a tarantula and a bearded dragon. The children loved holding the animals and they learnt lots of mind-blowing facts.

As part of our Design Technology lessons, we have been learning all about food preparation and hygiene. The children had the opportunity to put this new-found knowledge in action by creating their very own fruit kebabs. They washed, peeled, chopped, sliced and munched lots of different fruits.

As part of our History lessons, we have focused on two iconic heroines – Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale. We learnt how these inspirational figures helped shaped the face of modern-day nursing. The children enjoyed taking part in a teddy bear workshop and they all agreed that nursing is a very challenging, yet rewarding career. As part of our English lessons, the children have enjoyed reading, 'The Dragon machine.' They have learnt about different sentence types and they even watched a video of a dragon invasion—in our SCHOOL! The children worked very hard to prepare some interview questions for all the witnesses and we definitely think we have some budding reporters.

Our children say...

"I think Mary Seacole is so inspirational and I think she was a real-life superhero!"

"I loved holding the tarantula and I think I am going to ask Santa for one next year."

"I really enjoyed watching the dragons invade our school and I think we should have kept one as a school pet."



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Year 3



This Half-Term...

This half-term, we have been learning all about volcanoes. We cut up a map of the world to see where the tectonic plates met and used maps to find volcanoes located around the 'ring of fire.'

In Science, we carried out an investigation to test which surface a car would travel the fastest on. We tried some surfaces in the classroom and some on the playground too. We also used rulers to measure the distance. We were surprised at some of our results!

We took part in lots of activities during 'Children's Mental Health Week' where we focused on five ways to wellbeing: connect, be active, take notice, learn new things and express yourself. We really enjoyed our yoga session too!

In English this half-term, we have focused on the 'Stone Age Boy' book. We have looked at what life was like in the past and compared this to our daily lives. We have written wonderful historical narratives from the boy's point of view.

Our children say...

"I love learning about what is under our feet and all the different layers of the Earth."

"I've enjoyed the activities we did for children's mental health, especially when we wore our own clothes to express ourselves! It was also good to understand the importance of why we matter to ourselves and others around us."

"I have really enjoyed the Stone Age Boy book and learning about how their houses were different to ours."



Year 4



This Half-Term...

In Writing this half-term, we have been learning all about the volcano that erupted in Pompeii. We have been using the text: 'Escape to Pompeii' as inspiration for our writing, and writing from the perspective of one of the children.

In Computing, we have been coding using Scratch. We have been focusing on using repeated loops to programme and discussing what the advantages and limitations are of using loops.

In Topic, we have been focusing on Ancient Greece. We had an archaeologist and Greek warrior come and visit us. We did lots of fun and interesting things like crushing grapes to make wine, creating our shields and using the shields to make formations.

In Design and Technology, we have been learning about the origins of pizza. We made our pizza inspired by the colours of the Italian flag and designed pizza boxes for our pizza to go home in.

Our children say...

"I loved designing our shields and learning battle formations!"

"Making Scratch animations was really fun, we even changed the outfits of our character."

"We have learnt so many facts about volcanoes from guided reading and our homework all about volcanoes."



Love

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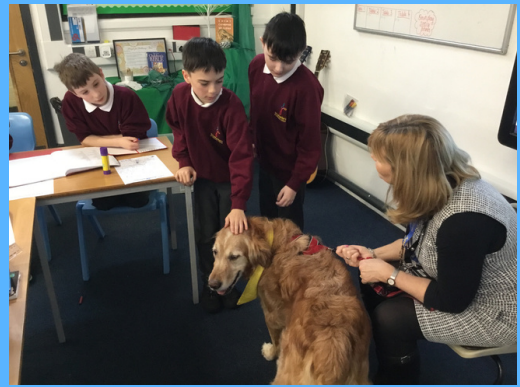
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Year 5



This Half-Term...

In writing this half-term, we have continued to read *Street Child* to complement our learning in Topic – The Victorians. We have enjoyed writing historical stories as well as finding out what happened to Jim Jarvis when he escaped the workhouse!

In Science, we have been learning about the properties and changes of materials. We have completed quite a few investigations to explore different materials including: find out about magnetic materials, investigating thermal insulators and discovering which substances are soluble.

In Spanish, we have been preparing for our next Google Meet with our pen pals by practising saying which hobbies we enjoy. We have also been preparing for our Spanish Café after half-term by making menus and learning how to be good waiters!

In Art, we have been learning about using colour and line to portray mood and tone in our artwork. We have listened to different music whilst drawing to show how mood can affect our art work as well as looking at a range of different artists work and analysing their use of colour and line.

Our children say...

“I really enjoyed learning about the lives of Victorians in Topic and English.”

“I really liked reading about the Victorian workhouses in a book called *Street Child*. We learnt about what happened to Jim Jarvis and how he escaped but still wasn't safe.”

“We have learnt a lot about materials and how they can be used in modern day life. We know how important they are for different purposes and the impact that they have on our everyday lives. We have done lots of investigations which has been fun!”



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Year 6



This Half-Term...

In Science, our unit this term is Evolution and Inheritance. It has been really interesting learning all about the characteristics we might inherit from our parents; we also studied each other's baby photos and played a game of Guess Who!

We have loved reading our class text 'The Explorer'. The book is all about a group of children whose plane crashes in The Amazon and they face lots of challenges whilst trying to survive. In our Writing lessons, we have written a diary entry, non-chronological report and formal letter based around this text.

In Topic, we have been focusing on 'Biomes'; we've studied different biomes all around the world and learned how certain creatures can survive depending on climate conditions.

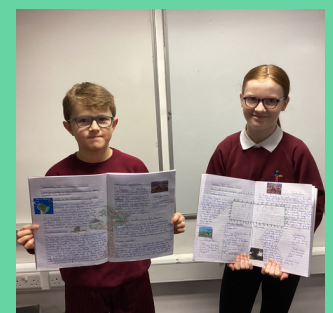
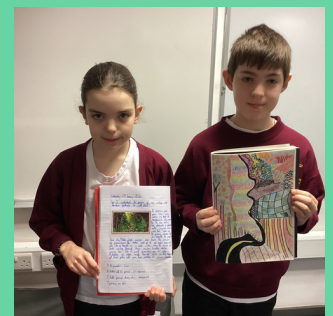
Our focus artist this term is David Hockney. We have studied many of his paintings and used them as inspiration to create our own landscapes!

Our children say...

"I really enjoyed Children's Mental Health Week. The wellbeing workshop was a really good way for me to practise mindful breathing!"

"Science has been so fun – I really enjoyed learning how humans have evolved and throughout history and how Homo Sapiens were able to survive millions of years ago!"

"Dance has been really fun; we've been working on our own class dance which we performed to the other year group. It has really boosted my confidence!"



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Sports



What a half-term that it has been for sports, both within and outside of the curriculum! Sports is definitely something to celebrate at St Catherine's... This half-term, our curriculum has offered specialist gymnastics and dance sessions to help our children to progress their skills with the support of specialist teachers, while other year groups have been mastering invasion games with Mr Hollins. In addition to this, our children have attended lots of sporting and extra-curricular events. Our Year 5 and 6 football teams have been training weekly, competing in matches against other schools as well as participating in events at Manchester United Football Club. Our netball team continues to train weekly, preparing for competing against other schools in netball tournaments next half-term. Well done to our cross country super stars who have trained and attended their races this month. We are so proud of everybody for your efforts.

We continue to have a range of after school sporting opportunities for our children including football, netball, cheerleading, gymnastics, dance and yoga and it's great to see so many children accessing these.



Leo in Year 6 recently represented the Manchester Schools Team in Cross Country at Heaton Park. He had a fantastic run (even after showing true perseverance with a tricky and slippery start) and we are so proud of his amazing efforts. Well done, Leo!

Student Leadership



Laudato Si Council

This half-term the Laudato Si' councillors have been fabulous Mental Health ambassadors throughout school. In the lead up to Children's Mental Health Week, they worked on promoting the 5 Ways to Wellbeing: Connect, Move, Take Notice, Learn and Give. They are also developing a new display in school, which will be showcased next term!

Caritas Ambassadors

Our Caritas Ambassadors have been thinking of ways to promote their leadership group in school so that people know who they are and how they can help. We have also been discussing the issues with community parking and ideas of action we can take to try and make a difference.

Learning Leaders

Our learning leaders have continued to help our younger children with sessions in class, supporting them with their learning. We love seeing our older children being such fantastic role models for our younger children!

GIFT Team

This half-term we have continued to support the Catholic Life and Mission of the school. We were visited by Imran during other faiths week where we learnt all about Islam. After his visit, we wrote a summary of our learning for the weekly newsletter. During the last week of half-term, we supported our younger pupils to begin their Lenten journey. After our Ash Wednesday Mass, where we read the introduction and bidding prayers, we visited each Early Years and KS1 class to distribute ashes to them. We read some readings and prayers before making the sign of the cross with ashes on each child's foreheads. We also encouraged them to think about their Lenten Promises.



Student Leadership



Climate Change Champions

This half-term, the Eco-Committee has been very busy! We have been learning all about waste and how we as a school promote more sustainable solutions. The children have created PowerPoints that they have presented to every class in the school (including Nursery and Reception) about paper recycling, the importance of trees for us and our planet. The children created a Paper Recycling Poster Competition for each class to win prizes and Core Value Points. In addition, the children have been busy discussing how we can tackle food waste. We have spoken with our business manager and talked about ways in which we can help to prevent less waste being produced by the school. The children have set up a compost bin and we will begin putting the fruit and vegetable waste into it over the next few half-terms.



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Parent and Teacher Association (PTA)



Dear parents and carers,

Many thanks for your support during the last half term and a special thank you to our wonderful nursery parents who hosted and donated delicious cakes for last weeks coffee morning.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to join the meeting to vote in the committee for this year. Our next meeting will take place in the Parrs Wood Pub on Tuesday 12th March at 7.30pm. If you can't make the meeting but would like to get involved in any of the upcoming events, we would love to hear from you. You can get in touch with Marian on 07383010123 or email us at stcatherinesdidsburypta@gmail.com.

Finance update:

Bag2school – £150

Bedtime Stories – £181

Coffee Morning – £110

Amount raised since September – £6756



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Parent and Teacher Association (PTA)



UPCOMING EVENTS:

Mother's Day Coffee Morning

Ahead of Mother's day, join us for a special coffee morning on Friday 8th March in the Social Club from 8.35am

PTA Meeting

Join us in the Parris Wood pub from 7.30pm on Tuesday 12th March. We will be starting to plan this year's Summer Fair in addition to other events taking place in the summer term. Everyone is welcome to join in, you will be guaranteed a warm welcome!

St Patrick's Day celebration

We will be celebrating St Patrick's Day after school on Friday 15th March, watch out for further details after half term.

Eco Fair

There will be refreshments available to enjoy during the Eco Fair after school on Thursday 28th March.

ONLINE FUNDRAISERS

Your School Lottery

Congratulations to our recent local draw winners, the more people that play the bigger our weekly guaranteed prize will be!!!

Win the ultimate family entertainment experience when you support our lottery this February! Unlock a world of excitement with our Mega Nintendo Switch Bundle: From intense fitness workouts to Mario Kart races and Zelda adventures, all on a dazzling 50" UltraHD Smart TV. It's your all-in-one entertainment thrill.

Get your tickets before Saturday 24th February to be in with a chance to win!

<https://www.yourschoollottery.co.uk/lottery/school/st-catherines-r-c-primary-school>



Parent and Teacher Association (PTA)



Easy Fundraising

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stcatherinesdidsbury/>

Easy Fundraising is a great way you can help raise funds for school whenever you shop online without costing you a penny! Use Easy fundraising to shop with over 7,000 brands including Amazon, John Lewis, Tesco, Currys, Asda, Apple and many more – when you shop you will raise a free donation for St Catherine's every time. It's that easy, follow the link above to join today.

Gift Matching:

Please check with your employer to see whether you are eligible for Gift Matching as part of the company benefit. Your contributions towards fundraising activities for the PTA can often be matched either in full or in part by your employer.

Thank you for your continued support, have a lovely half term break.

The PTA ❤️

PTA Committee

Chair – Marian Glorioso

Co Secretaries – Tina Fitzpatrick and Daniela Bartolo Romano

Treasurer – Katie Sammonds