

Dear Parents/Carers,

September 8th, 2020

We hope you've had a lovely weekend and that the children enjoyed returning to school last week. We have loved being back in class with them and can't wait for the year ahead!

Our first Literacy unit is going to be using a picture book called 'The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind' which is a true story of a young boy in Malawi. More recently, this was adapted by Netflix into a feature length film. We will be using appropriate extracts of the film alongside the text to support the children with their global citizenship theme of Sustainable Development and understanding in Science (electricity), Design and Technology, and Geography (Population: is there enough food to feed the world?). The film is rated a PG by the British Board of Film Certification, so we would like to make you aware we are using this in advance.

An outline of 'The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind'

When William Kamkwamba was just 14 years old, his family told him that he must leave school and come home to work on the farm – they could no longer afford his fees. This is his story of how he found a way to make a difference, how he brought light to his family and village, and hope to his nation. Malawi is a country battling AIDS, drought and famine. In 2002, a season of floods, followed by the most severe famine in fifty years, brought the country to its knees. Like the majority of the population, William's family were farmers. They were totally reliant on the maize crop. By the end of 2001, after many lean and difficult years, the crop failed. They were running out of food, with nothing to sell, with months until the next harvest.

Forced to leave school at 14 years old, with no hope of raising the funds to return, William resorted to borrowing books from the small local library to continue his education. One day, browsing the titles, he picked up a book about energy, with a picture of a wind turbine on the front cover. Fascinated by science and electricity, but knowing little about the technology, William decided to build his own. Ridiculed by those around him, and exhausted from his work in the fields every day, he used nothing more than bits of scrap metal, old bicycle parts and wood from the blue gum tree - but slowly he built his very own windmill.

This windmill has changed the world in which William and his family live. Only 2 per cent of Malawi has electricity; William's windmill now powers the lightbulbs and radio for his compound. He has since built more windmills for his school and his village.

When news of William's invention spread, people from across the globe offered to help him. Soon he was re-enrolled in college and travelling to America to visit wind farms. This is his incredible story.

William's dream is that other people will learn to help themselves – one windmill and one light bulb at a time. Maybe one day they too, will be able to power their own computers, and use the internet, and see for themselves how his life has changed after picking up that book in the library.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch via the Year 6 email address.

Many thanks and stay safe,

Grace Mizon and James Munn
year6@st-stephens.richmond.sch.uk

For more information please see our website and school Twitter pages:

www.st-stephens.richmond.sch.uk

www.twitter.com/ststephenscofe