



Dear Parents and Carers,

May the joy of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, the worship of the wisemen and the peace of Christ child be yours this Christmas

As the Autumn term draws to a close, we reflect on the past few months. During this term, in particular, the children have worked so hard and shown resilience and determination. It has been a joy to restore most aspects of school life, especially being together as a community again. We are blessed to be surrounded by wonderful children, parents, staff, governors, the church and wider community.

The Autumn term has been showered with many highlights. Some examples include a visit from Bishop Graham - who was very impressed with the children's thoughtful questions; a fabulous range of trips to enrich learning; a full return to our music curriculum; two fantastic Nativities led by Reception and Year 2; a welcome return to class assemblies and a successful anti-prejudice week and Black History Month. Furthermore, we are so proud that Ms Collins was awarded the LGBT+ Inclusive Teacher of the Year Award - a real testament to her dedication and leadership of PSHE, in partnership with Mrs Novell. Furthermore, all the children were fabulous ambassadors when we opened our doors for school tours for prospective parents - our visitors were extremely impressed with our children's quiet confidence, knowledge and good manners.

We have recently reviewed our vision statement with both staff, governors and pupils. As always, our children, through the school council, gave us the best advice and helped us to make it most meaningful to them and capture our ethos at St Stephen's. Please see below:

At St Stephen's, we build each other up in love and learning, embracing our strengths and developing a passion for lifelong learning. We create opportunities for every child to see themselves as unique, courageous and resilient global citizens - to always be active upstanders for fairness and equity and against discrimination and injustice.

The whole staff continue to amaze us with their commitment and resilience. Despite significant staff absence and a lack of available supply agency staff, the whole team has pulled together to ensure that the children are receiving a good education. Thanks to them, we haven't yet had to close any classes due to lack of staff. We really do appreciate every single member of our team. We send our very best wishes to Mrs Dempsey and Mrs Novell and we will miss them.

On a similar note, our parental body has continued to be a pillar of strength in so many ways. We appreciate your kind words and actions of support and encouragement, vigilance with Covid-19 measures and not least, supporting your child's learning from home. We also thank those who have given up their time to accompany school trips this term and also those who have supported the library re-opening.

We would like to give a special mention to FOSS, who have gone above and beyond this term to try to recoup funds, which benefit each and every child in many ways. A highlight for the children is always the Christmas Market - we hope you enjoy your carefully chosen gifts!

Finally, we wish you all a happy, peaceful, healthy and joyful Christmas. We look forward to the new year and pray for minimal disruption in light of recent news. On Friday, please remember school will close at 2.15pm.

Best Wishes,

St Stephen's Primary School Team

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. **Isaiah 9:6***