



18th February 2022

SPRING NEWSLETTER

Dear parents and carers,

As we reach the end of this half-term, it's hard to believe we are already at the mid-point of our year! Time continues to race on and as always, there is so much happening at St Gabriel's. Our children have been incredibly busy with their learning; the next phase of our school building is well underway; we've enjoyed special events; extra-curricular clubs and inter-school sports competitions among many other things. Completely understandably this half term COVID and other illnesses have impacted on our overall attendance for both staff and pupils and we know that this is something which can't be helped. As we entered January we were told to prepare for up to 25% absence on any given day and it is really pleasing that we've maintained attendance above that throughout the half term. My heartfelt thanks goes out to everyone who has helped keep things moving forwards as normally as possible. From staff covering colleagues to parents bringing neighbours children to school, our teamwork makes this a special community. My hope and prayer for the rest of the year is that we are now through the worst of it and attendance increases moving forwards. As always, please continue to make every effort to prioritise attendance for your child.

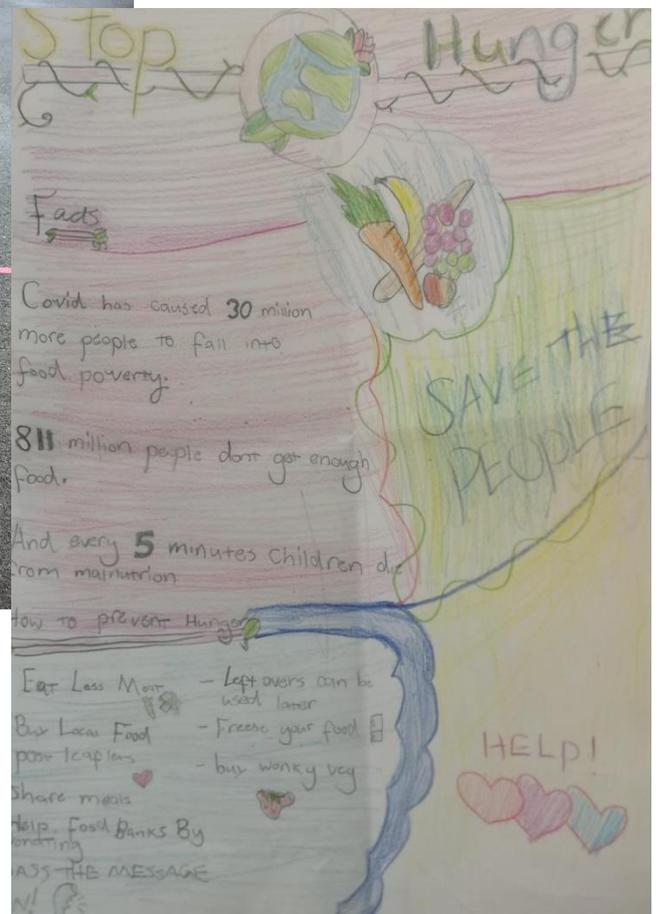
Festival of Hope

This term, the school celebrated its first Festival of Hope. During the festival, each class focussed on an issue in the world which they wanted to address. The children had some wonderful ideas and were passionate to make a difference on a range of causes including: promoting understanding around animal welfare; tackling racism and gender inequality; reducing plastic in the oceans and deforestation; addressing food poverty and caring for the local environment. The festival has led to some

positive change in school such as a new litter picking team and a group of year 3 children who spend time each day cleaning yogurt pots which can then be recycled. Classes have also had replies from letters sent to large companies asking for change. The festival was based on the theme of 'courageous advocacy', aiming to be a force for good in our world, confronting issues which reflect God's concern for his people and creation.



Bell Class Litter Picking



Raising Awareness of Food Poverty

Safer Internet Day

Safer Internet Day is celebrated globally in February each year to promote the safe and positive use of digital technology for children and young people, and to inspire a national conversation about using technology responsibly, respectfully, critically, and creatively. From gaming and chat, to streaming and video, young people are shaping the interactive entertainment spaces they are a part of. Safer Internet Day 2022

celebrates young people's role in creating a safer internet, whether that is whilst gaming and creating content, or interacting with their friends and peers. This year the theme was 'All fun and games?' Exploring respect and relationships online. The UK Safer Internet Centre has a whole host of **resources and advice** for families to explore together linked to the day. <https://saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2022/advice-for-parents-and-carers>

You might like to complete this **quiz** which follows up some of the themes explored. <https://saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2022/quiz-7-11>

Further helpful advice for all parents about phones, laptops, games consoles and more can be found here: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers>

Safer searching - One really helpful tip is to encourage the use of safer search engines when children are using the internet. Kiddle, Swiggle, KidRex, Fact Monster, Kidzsearch are all good ones to try or ensure Safesearch is used on google.



<https://www.kiddle.co/>

<https://swiggle.org.uk/>

<https://www.alarms.org/kidrex/>

Mental health Week

The theme of this year's Children's Mental Health Week was Growing Together. Growing Together is about growing emotionally and finding ways to help each other grow. Challenges and setbacks can help us to grow and adapt and trying new things can help us to move beyond our comfort zone into a new realm of possibility and potential. However, emotional growth is often a gradual process that happens over time, and sometimes we might feel a bit 'stuck'. As parents and carers, you play a crucial role in your child's mental health. Check out the **free resources** for families here: <https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/parents-and-carers/>

Sports

Huge credit to the children who took part in our tag-rugby and cross country inter-school competitions this half term! We're looking forward to more of these events as the year progresses.



Car parking

Sadly, we have had a few occasions this half term where cars have bumped into each other in the car park. Please can we encourage all drivers to be extremely cautious and careful on site, for the potential damage to parked cars but especially as we have children moving around with parents. Being slow and vigilant is the priority. To help with this issue can I once again encourage as many families as possible to walk, bike or scoot to school. Parking off site in Houlton and walking a short way to school is a good option for those travelling from further afield.

Eco School

Over the last few months, the Eco-School team have been working hard on the third step of the Eco-School programme. In this stage, the pupils had to create an action plan based on three of environmental topics. Using their results from our environmental review, the pupils have chosen to reduce litter and waste within the school in addition they have chosen to improve the school grounds. Together they have created some actions linked to these three topics.

Environmental Topic	Aim	Actions
Litter	To reduce the amount of litter on the playground	Litter picking team, litter police, more bins around the school
Waste	To reduce the amount of paper and plastic waste Reduce the amount of fruit waste going into normal bins	The lunch box challenge Fruit bins and compost bin Posters to inform people about what to recycle in the blue bins at school
School grounds	Increase the amount of trees and plants	Tree planting Gardening club Classroom plants

This half term, the Eco-School team have been very impressed the progress they have made on reducing fruit and plastic waste as lots of children are now using special fruit bins for composting. Lots of children are reducing the amount of plastic in their lunch boxes and yoghurt pots are now being recycled in school. Next half

term, several pupils across the school will have opportunity to be part of the litter picking team at break time which will help contribute to reducing the litter around school. We will continue to keep you posted on our Eco-School journey over the next few months!

Pupil Feedback

We asked all of our children in Key Stage 2 a variety of questions on school life, their learning, behaviour, safety and personal development. Here is what they had to say:

- The vast majority of children report they **enjoy school most or all of the time** and believe their teachers support them to do their best in lessons.
- The majority of children report feeling well-challenged in their lessons, **enjoy learning**, get the right amount of feedback about their next steps and believe their teachers listen to what they have to say in lessons.
- Most children would recommend this school to a friend.
- Children were extremely positive when reflecting on their peers' behaviour, the vast majority reporting they believe it is **good most or all of the time**.
- 98% report that bullying either doesn't occur or that if it does, teachers intervene quickly and effectively to address bullying.
- Nearly all children **feel safe in school most or all of the time**. Nearly all children report they know of an adult in school they can talk to if something is worrying them.
- Nearly all children reported the school encourages them to look after their **physical and mental health**.
- Nearly all children believe the school encourages them to **respect and value diversity and equality**.
- Nearly all children reported the school encourages their **independence and opportunities to take responsibility**.
- Three quarters of children take the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular opportunities such as sports, music or art clubs with over half taking part in these frequently.

We are so pleased with this positive feedback from our children and will be listening closely to them as we seek to constantly improve our work.

Collective worship

During our collective worship assemblies this term, the children have been focussing on the value of Courage. We have reflected on the courage shown by biblical characters including Moses, Esther and Rahab. On Thursdays, we worship through song and the children have been building their repertoire of hymns and worship songs successfully over the half term, it is always a huge pleasure to hear the school singing together.

We wish you all a happy and restful half term holiday together and see you back here safely on **Tuesday 1st March**.

Yours sincerely,



Mr. A. Taylor
Headteacher

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We'll post who is sharing in assembly here each week!



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