



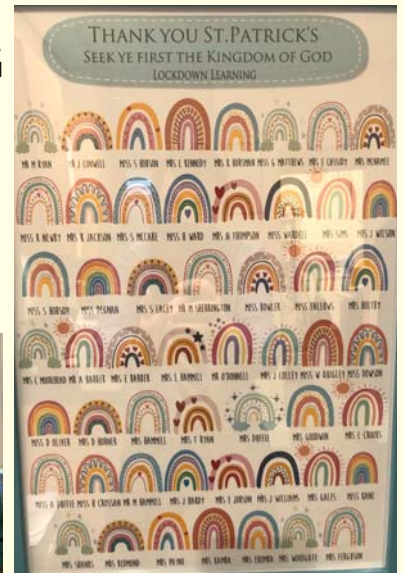
Caring for our Community

In these difficult times for everyone, St. Patrick's Primary School has continued to explore ways in which the school could support those most in need. At Christmas time, our Year 6 classes teamed up with Cattle and Cane's Joe Hammill to spread a little Christmas cheer to those feeling isolated in our community. Children sang Christmas songs and carols while dropping off a few treats for the elderly in our parish. Both the songs and the treats went down well. Our school community also gave so generously to Thornaby Foodbank at a time when some people are struggling to make ends meet. It was good to get hands on and help deliver the parcels ourselves. Food parcels were made up from the huge amounts donated by our parents and families. The children also wanted to send a bit of Christmas cheer to those in hospital- both the patients and nursing staff. Throughout the school, children made decorations for the Children's wards and waiting areas at North Tees University Hospital. Batches of antlers and red noses were delivered to school by Teesside Hospice for the children to take part in the Reindeer Run Fundraiser. It was great fun seeing hundreds of reindeers running around the school and raising money for the Hospice. Christmas Messages were sent inside tree baubles to the elderly with the help and organisation of "Little Sprouts". All acts of kindness were greatly appreciated by all and it just goes to show what community spirit is in and around Thornaby.



Thank you for the Thank you!

Remote learning is not easy for anyone. Staff have had to spin plates as they teach both children in school as well as those at home at the same time. All of our staff have been in school throughout this lockdown period to ensure teaching and learning continues for everyone. It has not been plain sailing for parents too as they have had to juggle shifts at work so that they can support children with their learning in living rooms and at kitchen tables. The whole process has needed good communication, flexibility, patience and understanding which has been underpinned with excellent relationships between home and school. We have a wonderful relationship with our parents. Parent's appreciation has been demonstrated in the many acts of kindness in which we have received. Many deliveries of treats (weight watchers have been suspended for now), tea and coffee mountains, bespoke Christmas tree decorations perfectly crafted, simple words of gratitude and mementos and keepsakes thoughtfully created. We even received a section of rainforest from one family to show their gratitude! We said right back at the beginning of the pandemic that we would face whatever comes our way as a community and we have done just that. Thank you!



Staying Safe online

We are relying more and more on technology and the use of the internet in these remote times but it is even more crucially important that our children know how to keep themselves safe online and what to do if they ever feel unsafe. Internet Safety Day is celebrated on February 9th. Children learned valuable lessons as well as enjoying activities which gave them the skills and knowledge of keeping safe when using the internet. Children learned about creating strong passwords, searching safely and how to stay safe when using social media.



Spirit provides Community Spirit

Thornaby born and bred and Gin distiller Jay Byers proved that Thornaby folk have plenty of spirit! Jay kindly donated 20 laptops to schools around the town and he didn't forget his old stomping ground at St. Pat's. Jay kindly donated two Chromebooks for our most vulnerable children to use while learning at home. It was good to talk with Jay about his childhood memories of growing up in Thornaby and he commented that he wanted to step in and do what he could as a local business and believed it was his responsibility to support the community that has allowed him to grow as a person and as a business. Thank you Jay for your generosity and kind nature.





Playground Improvements

We have never stood still in improving the outdoor playground environment so that there is plenty to do when we have everyone back in school and we know how important the fresh air is to all of us. Thanks to the creative skills of our caretaker Mr. Matthew Hammill, we have developed areas for our youngest children to benefit from and to store play equipment safely. They can enjoy making different sounds in the outdoor music studio and listen to alfresco stories in a special handcarved story chair. He even remembered to make a home for our resident hedgehog-Spike! Thank you Mr. Hammill!



Holocaust Memorial Day

The theme for this year's Holocaust Memorial Day was "Be the light in the darkness" which is also very reflective of the current climate that we are living in. Our pupils reflected on how they can be a light in other people's darkness today and looked back at the times when as a human race we have got this wrong. Children explored the themes of how people have sought refuge and racial intolerance through history and in recent times too. Poems were written and artwork was created on a day for memorial and renewal. Children learning from home also joined in with activities across the day and managed to find their own time to reflect in the comfort of their own homes.



A good old tale

It has been an equally difficult time for creative art performers who have been unable to ply their trade while schools have had to put covid risk assessments in place.

Thankfully being creative, some have been able to remotely join schools to offer their services. In February, we were able to welcome an old friend of ours-storyteller and writer Chris Connaughton. From his study in Hampshire,

Chris reconnected with Thornaby to retell his versions of some classics for our children to enjoy. Some were in school and some were able to enjoy Chris' performances in the comfort of their own homes. Our youngest children enjoyed The Gingerbread Man and other traditional tales. Some made lovely biscuits at home to munch while they listened in. Other classics like The Firebird entertained Years 3 and 4 while our Year 5 and 6 children were held in suspense by Charles Dicken's ghost story - The Signalman. A great day of storytelling was enjoyed by children and parents!



Be Yourself

Everyone is feeling the strain of days in lockdown and it is equally difficult for our children who cannot go out and enjoy themselves like they used to. It was Children's Mental Health Awareness Week in February. To mark the week, lessons were less screen dependent and we celebrated a "Be Yourself Day" where children could dress in a way that reflected their personality and interest. Children wore cub uniforms, team sport kits, dressed as super heroes and even staff went bananas to express their feelings.



Early Years- the building blocks for learning

Our Nursery has remained open for all throughout the majority of the lockdown. Both little ones at home and at school received the same creative curriculum which provides the foundations for lifelong learning. Children have continued to learn the basics of reading, writing and number as well as finding out about the world around them - including celebrating the Chinese New Year.





Hopes and a Future

As part of the family of schools in the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust, we are exploring and celebrating the theme of "Hopes and a Future". The idea has been developed from a piece of scripture from the book of Jeremiah where God tells us that He loves us and he has good plans for us. This message is helping shape part of our curriculum. So far, children have thought about what God's message is for each of us and reflected this in art, poetry and in music where a special song has been written by Thornaby singer and songwriter Joseph Hammill. Again, children at home joined in with the activities and have made some wonderful pieces of art and craft. The work has helped the children to stay positive about having a brighter future and look for signs of hope all around us!



A distant and not so distant Curriculum

It was not the start to the New Year that we all wanted-especially parents. Further lockdown restrictions meant that school would be partially closed for the majority of children. Thankfully, we had everything in place to allow home learners to continue to learn at home and have the same opportunities as those children that were in school. We wanted to enable pupils at home to have full access to the curriculum and have teachers there on line to support and teach children while they were at home. The school day at home followed the same structure as if pupils were in school. All children gathered for registration each morning and afternoon with "live" lessons being taught throughout the day. After lesson inputs, teaching staff stayed online to help and support those children who needed help. This approach has proven successful with almost every child being engaged with their learning- it was also a hit with parents! There was a full curriculum on offer with all subjects being delivered. In music, children and parents even improvised with percussion instruments so entered pots and pans from out of the kitchen. Whole-school and live PE sessions with sports specialists Jamie Poole and Matthew Bowman became very popular with everyone joining in- children, parents and staff. The quality of art produced even caught the eye of local artist Lucy Pittaway who emailed the children to say how impressed she was with their art. Little ones made from castles and dragon eggs to beanstalks to complement their stories and writing. Children at home got creative with their maths and hosted number quiz games for the rest of the house- and pets- to take part in. Home-grown scientists made their own racing track board games using magnetic forces while the bread and butter phonics was taught through software called Phonics Bug. Staff worked hard to make sure no one was left behind.



Remembering Captain Tom

He touched the hearts of the Nation and also captured ours too. We paused and looked at a remarkable gentleman who not only lived a life to the full but gave of himself so that others could have life too. We found that our children wanted to know more about him, read books on him, write and draw pictures of him. The young generation of our school gathered inspiration from Sir Captain Tom and his memory will live on in the hearts of so many.

