

From Mr Spens:

It's been a very busy couple of weeks at school and it's going to continue that way as we enter the Christmas season! It's always a privilege to welcome visitors to our school and we have had a couple of very special visitors in the last few weeks.

On Monday 21st November, former pupil of St Helen's and Olympic Bronze medalist Sally Conway came back to visit her old school and talk to the children about what it takes to make it as an Olympian. It was really inspiring for the children to meet someone who had sat in the same classrooms as they have and who has made it to the very top of their sport. Sally represented Team GB in the Judo in Rio this year and gave us all plenty to think about!

This week, we hosted Dr Tom Robson who came to work with us as a school on developing excellent learning habits in our children. He held a session for parents on Wednesday after school and then worked with every class in the school on Thursday. He helped the children and teachers to reflect on what we do well already, what we can further improve on and what kinds of 'learning power' we can develop. Two particular 'gems' you might have heard the children talking about are 'Diamond Power', which is all about taking responsibility for solving the little problems we face by ourselves (getting dressed, making our beds, hanging up our coats...) and 'Emerald Power' which is about being courageous and sticking with things even when they get tough. We'll be looking to encourage and develop these habits over the next few weeks and months.

Yesterday, parents of Year 3 were treated to a fantastic performance from their children on the violin. 10 weeks of whole class tuition have inspired them and they put on a brilliant show.

At this time of year, much of our news is about the build-up to Christmas, so please do make note of the different dates and events.

Have a great weekend!



Sally Conway visits St Helen's



Dr Tom Robson working with Year 4



Year 3 performing their violins!

'Flying High' Art installation at St Helen's

Mrs Gear, one of our great teaching assistants, has organised and led an art project at the school under the strapline 'Flying High'. Children and staff have each decorated a bird so that it represents something amazing about them. All of the birds are now on display in the school hall, 'flying' together as one flock, heading in the same direction. The art installation represents the fact that we are all individuals, but together make up our school community. Please do take a look at this display as you visit the school over the next few weeks!



St Helen's awarded £10,000 grant for woodland development and Forest School training!

We are very pleased to be able to announce that we were awarded not £8,000 but £10,000 from Tesco in their 'Bags of Help' scheme. The grant will enable us to carry out some much needed development work in the woodland, but because so many people voted for us, we were awarded an additional £2,000 for development of our pond area. The money will enable us to:

- Re-fence the existing boundary of the woods (upgrading the current fencing)
- Improve access to the woods, the pathway and steps in particularly steep areas
- Create a storage area for equipment and resources
- Provide 'Forest Schools' training for staff
- Renovate the existing pond area



A big thank-you to everyone who voted for us!

Quotes about Dr Tom Robson:

Torin: 'We learnt about emerald power from Dr Tom. Emerald power is about not 'moaning and whinging' when things don't go your way.'

Danny: 'When Dr Tom came up to me, I felt a bit anxious and when he asked me to complete the sentence about the 'blaaah, blaaah, blaaah', I got it wrong twice, but as I didn't moan once I won an emerald for my class.'

Hatty: 'He was saying that when some people were chosen they were really calm. He was teaching us that when you face something difficult, you might feel butterflies in your tummy, but you need to stay calm and keep your emotions together and to yourself.'

Ben: 'It was an exciting, educational and scientific day and we've learnt not to moan when we face little difficulties in life and in the classroom. He told me that you have to commit 10,000 hours to something if you want to master it – he talked to me about being a professional footballer. He told us that his cousin was Ant, from 'Ant and Dec' and that he was working with two professional footballers to help them stay calm under pressure.'

Christmas Fair

A big thank-you to the PTA for their hard work in organising a fantastic Christmas Fair last week. A lot of hard work goes on behind the scenes to plan and arrange the different stalls and raffles. This year, a superb £1430 was raised for the PTA. Thanks to everyone who came along and supported the event!

Parent Governor appointments

Following the recent vacancies for parent governors, two parents were nominated for the two vacancies. As a result, there was no need for an election and we are pleased to announce that Anne Straw and Sarah Brown have both been re-appointed to the governing body.

New Music Teacher appointed at St Helen's

We are delighted to have appointed Mrs Keira Murphy as the music specialist for the coming year at St Helen's. She joined us a few weeks ago and brings a wealth of experience as a teacher and musician and will be working on Wednesdays with us. She replaces Mrs Dash who was unable to take up the post in September due to illness.

School Choir sing at the Parade tomorrow (Saturday 3rd December)

Tomorrow, our brilliant school choir are performing for the first time this academic year, when they will be singing Christmas songs at 10:30am at Alveston parade. Parents and children are very welcome to come and join in the fun!

Christmas Post Box

We will again be operating a Christmas card post box for the children in school. The post box will be in the main lobby of the school and will be in place from Monday 5th.

Children can use the post box to send cards to anyone within the school. Please do ensure that the recipient's full name and class is written on the envelope to help our Year 6 children sort and deliver!



Christmas Lunch

On Wednesday 14th December, the school cook will be preparing a special Christmas meal for us. This should be ordered and paid for in the usual way, using ParentPay. The menu will be:



Roast Turkey with stuffing, chipolata sausage and gravy or Vegetarian parcel with stuffing and gravy
Roast or mashed potatoes, seasonal vegetables
Chocolate Arctic Roll with chocolate sprinkles or Plum Duff with custard

Friday 16th December - Christmas Jumper Day

This year we have decided to support the 'Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day'. This will be a non-uniform day with the children invited to wear their Christmas Jumper in return for a donation of £1 each (or more!) for the charity 'Save the Children'. If you do not have a Christmas Jumper, it could just be an ordinary jumper in a Christmas colour or decorated on a Christmas theme!



Save the Children
CHRISTMAS
JUMPER DAY

Dates for your diary

Tuesday 6th December (6pm) & Thursday 8th December (2pm) – Nativity, Reception, Year 1 & Year 2
Tuesday 13th December – visit from Bristol Old Vic for Nativity performance
Tuesday 13th December – Christmas Party – Reception, Year 1 & Year 2 (pm)
Tuesday 13th December – Christmas Carols with Year 3 & Year 4, 7pm
Wednesday 14th December – Christmas Lunch
Friday 16th December – 'Christmas Jumper' day to support Save the Children
Friday 16th December – Christmas Party – Year 3 & Year 4 (am)
Friday 16th December – Christmas Party – Year 5 & Year 6 (pm)
Friday 16th December – end of Term 2
Tuesday 4th January – start of Term 3

Congratulations to our certificate winners this week:



Reception – Oliver H and Emily B
Year 1 – Ellie and Harry F
Year 2 – Mya and Max C
Year 3 – Evie S and Jake
Year 4 – Charlotte and James
Year 5 – Beck and Isobel W
Year 6 – Rosie and Luke D



Out of school achievements

- Charlie in Y1 has achieved his 15 metre distance swimming award.
- Thomas P in Y2 was awarded 'Player of the Week' for Thornbury Town under 6's.
- Mollie G in Y6 was given the 'Spirit of Cricket' award by Bristol Phoenix Cricket Club.
- Lucas, Mollie, Harry and Eva in Y6 completed the Scouts Mud Walk Challenge (approx. 8 miles).
- Madison in Reception class has achieved the Stage 3 Learn to Swim award.

St Helen's Church – Christmas Services

18th December 10am - All Age Christmas Service
23rd December 2pm - Christingle Workshop
24th December 4pm - Christingle Service
25th December 10am - All Age Service

Thornbury Baptist Church – Christmas Fun Factory

20th December, 10.30am to 12.30pm
For children in Reception class, Year 1 and Year 2 – no charge.
Parents and carers may stay and enjoy the coffee shop.
Register at www.thornburybaptistchurch.co.uk
or call 01454 419118