

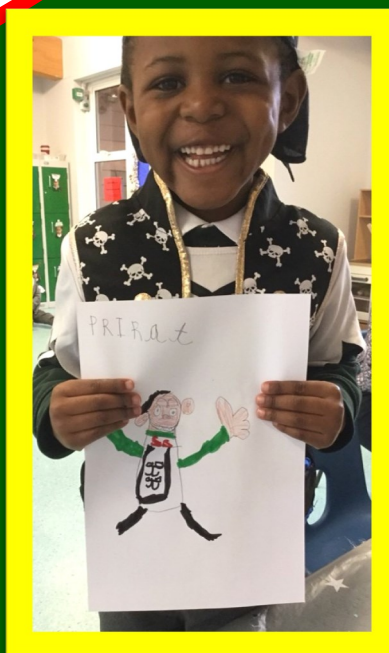


St Alban & St Stephen Catholic Primary School & Nursery

Weekly Newsletter



Feeling Good
& Topic Week



Thursday 11th February

A Lenten Prayer

Dear Lord,

I know You receive what is in my heart. Let me be inspired by Your words and the actions of Your son, Jesus.

Guide me to make sacrifices this Lent, with greater attention to You and those around me. Help me to pray more, Help me to me to fast and help me to give more.

Amen.





Dear Parents and Carers,

As the end of this half term is upon us, I just want to say again a huge thank you and well done to the St Alban & St Stephen Catholic Primary School community. I spent time this week going onto lessons in each year group to see the children and the innovative ways in which teachers are teaching. I continue to be amazed at what the teachers are doing and am very grateful to them all for their hard work.

The children are producing some fantastic work which I am really enjoying looking at. This is a testament to their hard work but also, I know, to the work that you are putting in behind the scenes as well. Thank you all.

It has been wonderful to see all the activities that have been happening during Feeling Good Week and our Topic Day. We hope that this changed the dynamics a little, and that the children enjoyed the various tasks that centred on their well-being.

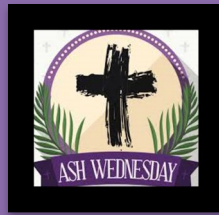
You must also prioritise your well-being during this time. Many of us are experiencing difficult feelings and emotions about the current situation. There are many online sites that are there to support children and adults, with many giving tips on staying mentally healthy. These tips may work for different people at different times. But, try not to put too much pressure on yourself if anything doesn't feel possible right now.

I remain hopeful that the 8th March will be the date for a full re-opening, but I have no more news than anyone else at the moment. As soon as there are any announcements, we will begin our plan for a return to school and I will, of course, keep you updated.

In the meantime, I hope that the February half term is a restful and happy family time for you and send you all my very best wishes.

Take care and stay safe.

Mrs Moore



The Lenten Season

During the half term break, we begin the season of Lent. Tuesday 16th February marks Shrove Tuesday. The word 'shrove' comes from the old Roman Catholic practice of being 'shriven' – meaning to confess one's sins. Traditionally, the shriving bell would be rung on Shrove Tuesday to call people to church to confess. Before Lent could begin in earnest, all edible temptations needed to be removed. In many countries, they celebrate 'Mardi Gras' which translates to 'Fat Tuesday'. Families would use all their rich ingredients to make pancakes, before the fasting on Ash Wednesday.

On Ash Wednesday, we receive the ashes on our forehead. The ashes are symbolic of repentance and asking for forgiveness and are burnt palm leaves from Palm Sunday the previous year. Over the next 40 days, we as a community will try to live in the way God would want us to.

Normally, we would receive the ashes altogether in school but this won't be the case. Please visit St Alban and St Stephen Parish Church website where the Ash Wednesday Mass will be streamed at 10.00am and 7.00pm if you are unable to attend.

During this season of Lent, we reflect and prepare ourselves for the joy of Easter. It is a solemn time when we spiritually prepare ourselves by offering up small sacrifices to God. God offered up His only Son on Good Friday so that we may be forgiven. Jesus made the ULTIMATE sacrifice.



In this season of Lent, we will ask the children to PRAY more, FAST more and GIVE more. Please talk to the children about their Lenten promises and what they can offer up for Jesus.



This year, the school Chaplaincy Team have chosen to raise money for the Catholic Children's Society as part of our almsgiving. You will find attached a PowerPoint made by one of the members explaining a little about this very worthwhile charity.

We would be very grateful for any donations over the Lenten period. This can be done through School Gateway.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Mrs Porter—Assistant Headteacher & R.E Faculty Lead.

This week, Cardinal Vincent has sent a pastoral letter encouraging us to mark Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent in our own homes.

The following is an edited version.

This year receiving ashes in church is going to be difficult. Yes, our churches are safe if the protective measures are fulfilled. But we must all be very careful about travelling too far. Some churches will...be open for the celebration of Mass as usual. But I have asked them not to make extra provision for Ash Wednesday. We must be so careful and cooperative in the measures we must take, to protect ourselves and to protect others.

...Receiving ashes is an outward sign of an inner step, a movement of the heart towards our beloved Lord. This year I invite you to concentrate...on this inner, spiritual movement than on its outward manifestation in the imposition of ashes...(and to)...celebrate Ash Wednesday at home, with your family, in the household or 'support bubble' of which you are a part....Spend some time praying in a way that you know...(making)...this a prayer of your heart for God's mercy upon this world struggling to cope with the terrible pandemic...

...Please do not hesitate, within your household or 'bubble', to bless each other...(and)...to remember together our need of the good Lord. Together, and through each other, he wants to comfort and reassure us of his loving presence. If, on this day, we set aside every pretence that we can do everything of ourselves, then we create in our hearts and lives the space for God's grace and strength to find a home in us.

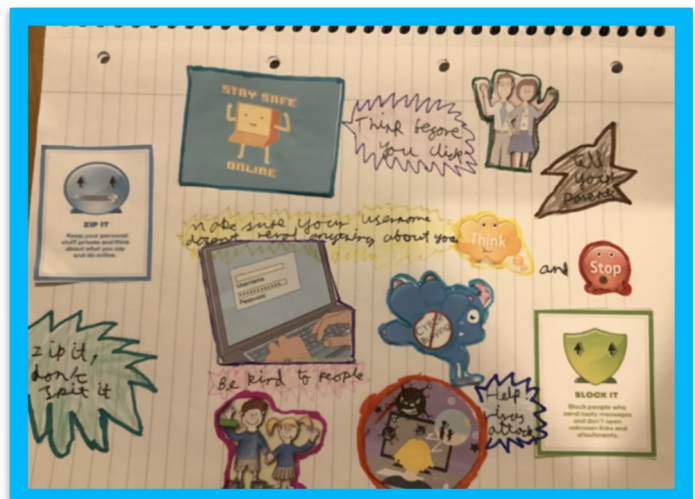
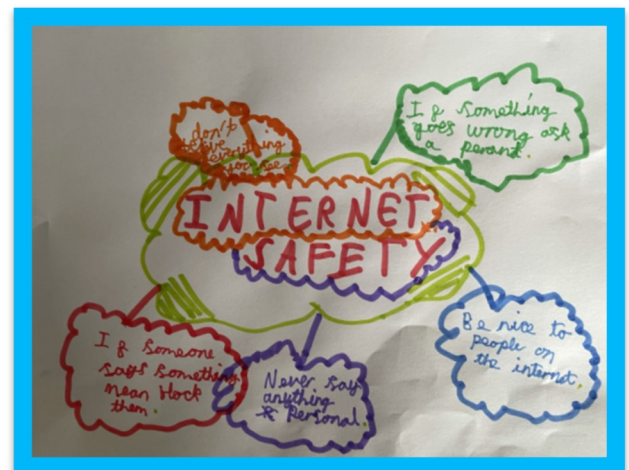
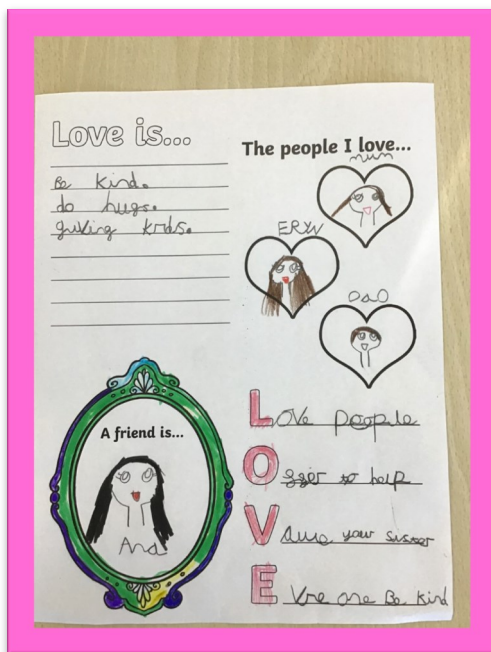
...Open your hearts to the gift of God's presence to support, comfort and strengthen you. This year, it may be best to do this, not by going to church, but by sharing the prayer, the blessing and this moment of dedication within the love of your family and friends.

1. Gather together and start with the Sign of the Cross.
2. Read the Gospel the Gospel for today Matthew 6.1-6 and 16-18.
3. Say together the following prayer: 'Lord God, with all our hearts we beseech you: have mercy on your people; spare your people; strengthen all people in the struggle against the havoc of this pandemic. Lord our God, without you we are so weak and our courage so limited. Give us your strength; give us your love; give us wisdom and skill to continue this fight. Spare your people, O Lord we pray. Comfort those who mourn and gather into your kingdom all who have died. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord, who died and rose to life, who lives and reigns with you, for ever and ever. Amen.'
4. Make the Sign of the Cross on each other's forehead using the following words: 'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.' or 'Repent, and believe in the Gospel'.
5. Pray together: The Our Father; the Hail Mary; each one with his or her own prayer or intention.
6. Conclude with the 'Glory be to the Father...'
Give each other a sign of peace.

Feel Good Week and Safer Internet Day

The children have had such a fantastic week of learning and creativity. We have continued focusing on our mental health with 'Feel Good Week'. We were getting ourselves fit in body and mind. Mrs Bowen even roped in the teachers for a fitness class after school!

On Tuesday, we also learnt about the importance of Internet Safety and the children did some great work on this. They also watched some very informative videos and many joined the BBC live lesson.



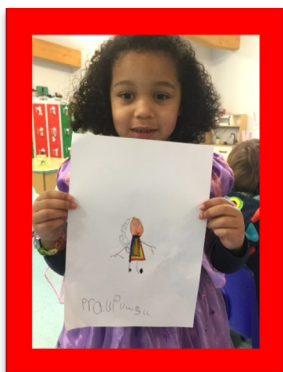
Nursery and Reception

Around the World & Once Upon a Time

In Nursery, we have been travelling around the world! We have been to London, Paris, Venice, New York and Beijing. For the themed day, we dressed up as the colours of the world and the colours of different flags. From Chile to Canada, and Somalia to Hawaii, we really have flags from all over the world. We even learnt a new song in Spanish with Mrs Flatt 'Hace Frio' - very suitable for the current weather! Also, we learnt how to say hello in different languages as well as decorating our own flags for our parade!



Today in Reception, our themed day was 'Fairy Tales'. The children dressed up as their favourite characters from their favourite fairy tales. This half term, we have explored lots of stories, sang and danced along to music, created fascinating reviews and wanted posters, and made our own unique story based arts and crafts. Today, they had the chance to explore their favourite fairy tale even further by drawing pictures, re-enacting their favourite parts and baking something related to the story! The children had lots of fun!

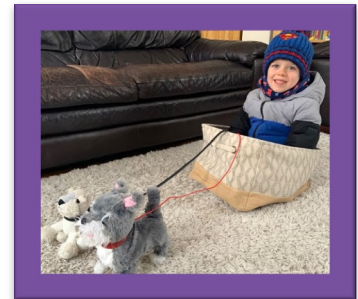


Year 1 and 2

Polar Expedition & Superheroes

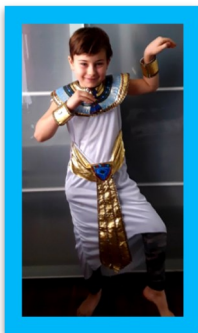
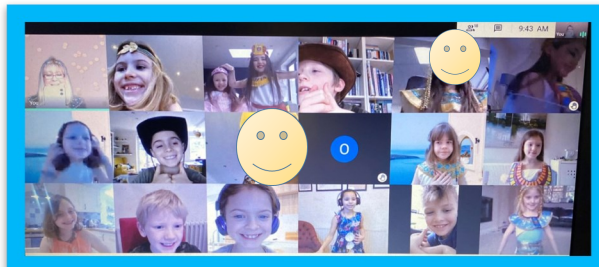
In Year 1, we have been on a Polar expedition! We dressed up in our warmest clothes and have had lots of fun making camps to shelter in and hot food and drinks to keep us warm in the minus 40 degree temperatures! In school, the children even gathered round a campfire to keep warm.

Year 2 have been busy being superheroes for the day. They created their own masks, baked some superheroes biscuits and made their own super hero transport!

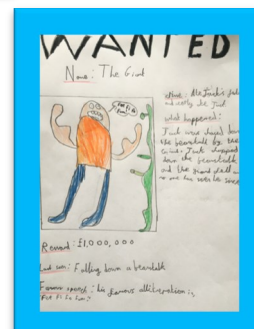
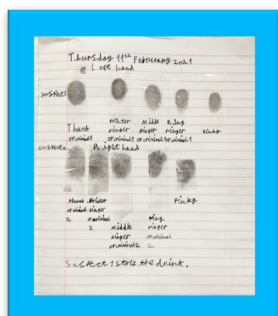


Year 3 & 4

The Ancient Egyptians & Crime and Punishment



Year 3 have been learning all about life in Ancient Egypt. They have created some fantastic artwork and had great fun designing their own jewellery and costumes. In Year 4, their topic was 'Crime and Punishment'. The children have been learning about crime and punishment throughout their History lessons this term. They had plenty of activities to choose from including fingerprint analysis, creating wanted posters, creating advertisements for a new type of punishment, and solving mysteries! Year 4 really enjoyed the day and produced some brilliant work. They even captured some suspicious criminals!



Year 5 & 6

Space & The Mayan Civilisation

Today, Year 5 experienced an exciting Space Day where they became promoters of space travel, space chefs, gravity-defying scientists, astronauts documenting the alien they had discovered on a faraway planet, and artists expressing their own interpretation of Space. We also solved mathematical space puzzles and created quizzes showing how much we have learned this half term. Some of us even created our own space projects!



Year 6 have been learning about Mayans this half term – they have had a great Mayan day exploring the culture and civilisation they left behind. Some of their tasks included attempting Mayan & Mesoamerican art styles, and building temples using a range of materials– we had Minecraft Mayan temples and cross-stitch pattern temples amongst what was submitted. They also made traditional hot chocolate using chilli. Reactions were...mixed!

