

29/3/21



Dear Parents, Carers, Staff and Governors,

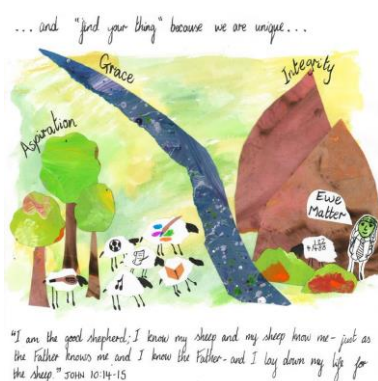
As today marks the day when we begin to meet with friends and family again outdoors, I thought I would share with you some of the highlights and successes of the past year and the challenges that we have overcome together, whilst thanking you all for the part you have played.

At St Katharine's, we always keep our school vision at the heart of everything we do – it drives us and helps us to understand why we do what we do and how we do it.



Throughout the past year, I am proud that we have been able to build on the story of our school, to share the messages and keep a strong sense of being connected through worship, our whole school approach to wellbeing, our SEASIDE curriculum and both in-school provision and remote learning.

The children have been amazing – they are so resilient and eager to learn and be part of our school. They are really enjoying taking part in the virtual inter-school sports competitions at the moment and years 2 to 6 are turning out in great numbers for their activity clubs. All children take part in numerous physical activity breaks during the day because it is vital that children are active. The best thing we can all do for ourselves and our families is to keep moving and be active – watch this video if you want to remind yourself why movement is crucial. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tyhd9BwINxg>



It is not a coincidence that we have a talented array of staff, teachers and teaching assistants, in the arts, PE and sport and other specialist subjects – we actively seek passionate staff who will go above and beyond to provide our children with extraordinary experiences and to help them to 'find their thing'.

Music and the arts at St Katharine's is another great strength of the school and part of our culture. Our music

teaching across the school is high quality and the children are being taught from early years using the Kodaly multi-sensory approach. In the autumn, we were awarded the Music Mark for quality music education. Music teaching has continued through lockdown, from key stage 1 active participation in live lessons to year 6 compositions using garage band.

Our SEASIDE curriculum is about the whole curriculum; themes (Sport and Wellbeing, Environment, Arts, Spirituality, Inspirational people and places, Diversity, Enterprise and Technology) are central to the ethos of the school and are taught through all different subjects and through special projects. During the past year, some of the special projects expertly put together by staff have been VE75, Our Great Generation, Our Coastal Community, Black History Week, Anti-Bullying Week, World Book Day and 'We Are Together'.

Our SEASIDE themes are local and global.



Take a good look at God's wonders- they'll take your breath away" psalm 124

We help everyone develop their whole self through Head Heart Hands
 Head ♥ Mental health and learning
 Heart ♥ Spirituality and relationships
 Hands ♥ Physical health



"You are God's masterpiece." EPHESIANS 2:10

We built on our whole school approach to wellbeing by further developing anti-bullying strategies and we are delighted to have just been awarded the 'Gold' award. We have recently become a lead school for 'Trickbox' and are introducing some exciting new cards and strategies across the school called Magic Minutes and the Habit Wheel. Last term, our very own 'Get St Katharine's Talking' online safety guide was published and children took part in exciting activities during online safety week. We also

maintained our Head, Heart, Hands activities through both lockdowns, ensuring that we promoted a balance of mental health, spiritual health and physical health activities. We do miss our 'Beach School' visits and other offsite trips but will be ready to move offsite when we are allowed. Every one of our teachers and teaching assistants offers something very special and I thank them for the extra work they do for our children.

A year ago I had to ask what zoom was when someone suggested a meeting and never dreamt a year later I would be delivering whole school worship, somewhat comically, via Teams! It is fair to say that we have ALL learnt a great deal in the last year. We always say, at St Katharine's, that we won't always get things right but we will definitely try our best, show resilience and keep learning. Staff have been phenomenal - every single

Our Powerful Learning Attributes help us to be powerful learners.



"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" PHILIPPIANS 4:13

member of staff: admin and site, cleaners, catering, teaching assistants, lunchtime, breakfast and after school, teachers and staff shielding. Our staff remained upbeat, positive, dedicated and displayed the energy levels required to do double the job – leading learning both at home and school. Our decision to have all our staff in school meant that we maintained our team spirit and all our children, whether at home or school, were taught by all the staff in the year team. Behind the scenes, but at the forefront of our school are our wonderful admin and site team, who have equally had to adapt and adjust and take on additional workload to enable the school to operate smoothly. The governing body have been extremely supportive, professional and efficient throughout, maintaining a focus on the core functions remotely.



Parents and carers have been brilliant regardless of whether children were at home or they were school-based. Nothing was perfect about the situation but we have appreciated parents' willingness to work with us with different routines, timings, communication and of course the challenges of Teams and working at home. The children have done parents proud and made the transition back to busy classrooms really well. Where children need a bit more support, we will help them.

Our approach to catch-up started last summer when we decided that we would not compromise our curriculum by narrowing it, rather we would work even harder to plan the reading, writing and maths the children needed so that we could continue with ALL the other curriculum subjects. One of our approaches has been to prioritise the continued training of staff across the curriculum.



All our teachers are working in teams to focus on particular strategies for effective teaching and learning to ensure they continually review their practice together. We were one of the initial 20 schools who trialled the new Early Years Curriculum, so are well-prepared for its implementation this September after following it for 3 years. Staff have had continued training in phonics to support reading and we are currently taking part in an early years maths project. A team of our teaching assistants are involved in training and monitoring a variety of interventions across the school, to support children in maths, English and

emotional literacy. A number of children are also taking part in some tutoring programmes and all children now have access to IXL for a personalised, targeted programme of maths.

We use the idea of 'Inside Out' to help us understand spirituality ...



"The Earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." PSALM 24

When all the children returned to school earlier this month, we wanted to mark the year with some collaborative arts projects. A team of staff explored how we could reflect spiritually, through the arts, on the past year and on hope for the future as part of our Global Neighbours work.

During Lent we have been looking at the page in 'Forever Flourishing' that explores making a difference through using our God-given gifts; the story of the miraculous catch and fishing for people and our phrase 'if we make enough ripples, we might just create a wave.'

... and use our gifts to make a difference in God's world.



The result is our beautiful image, 'Love Grows', which we have made into postcards that you can purchase to send messages to friends and family. All the children have also collaborated in a dance called 'Love Grows' that will be shared this week, where the motif has been developed from the Makaton signs for love and grows. We have some more exciting ideas for the summer term, restrictions permitting.

Thank you for all you have done for the children and the community. As we move into Easter and beyond, I hope you are all able to re-connect with the people and activities that you love. At St Katharine's, we will continue to provide our children with the very best that we can.

With best wishes

Nikki St John

Children encounter a bucketful of experiences at St Katharine's.



"God has given each of us a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them to serve one another." PETER 4:10

