

St Helen's and St Mary's Primary School Partnership

Growing together, pursuing life in all its fullness

Partnership News

Edition 1—February 2020

About 'Partnership News':

The partnership between St Mary's and St Helen's was established in June 2019. Our main aim since then has been to work together to enhance the learning and experiences of the children. Already, the work of the partnership is making an impact in both of the schools. We wanted to share some examples of this with you and so have launched 'Partnership News'. We'll publish a newsletter like this three times per year, in the Spring, Summer and Autumn terms. We hope you enjoy finding out about what has been going on! *Andy Spens, Executive Headteacher*

'Connected Curriculum' launch

Since September, a group of teachers from both schools have been working together, along with a teaching and learning consultant, to design a new and exciting approach to our curriculum. Mrs Timms and Mrs Lane from St Mary's have worked alongside Miss Hurd and Mr Adams from St Helen's to carefully design and construct a curriculum, relevant to the 21st Century and which prepares the children for the world in which they will live and work.

We were inspired by Greta Thunberg's quote: *"No one is too small to make a difference."*

Through their learning, we want our children to connect with the world, locally and globally and allow them to 'make their voices heard' about issues that are important to them.



Our new curriculum therefore has children as 'Brave Changemakers' at the very heart. We aim to provide our pupils with the knowledge, skills, habits and character traits that can be applied across all traditional academic subject areas and in all educational, career and social settings throughout their life. Under the banner of 'Social Justice', this term our children are exploring issues of fairness.

The curriculum project is really the first 'big' project that we have worked on together as a partnership. Working together has enabled us to go further than we could have gone individually,

sharing our skills and expertise, sharing the cost of an education consultant and creating opportunities for staff to plan alongside each other, enriching the experiences of our children.

The quality of the curriculum design created by staff across the partnership was recognised in St Helen's recent OFSTED inspection: *"The work pupils do is meaningful, has a purpose and furthers pupils' personal development. Teachers plan learning that helps pupils to understand how their actions make a difference to others."*

Our work on the curriculum will continue to develop. We look forward to sharing more of the impact from this project with you over the next few years.



Year 1&2 children from St Mary's visited a local care home to spread some joy! Their topic: "What makes me happy?"

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KS2 Christmas Silent Disco!

One of the benefits of partnership is that we can share the cost of activities that could benefit both schools. In December, the Friends of St Helen's and the Friends of St Mary's split the cost of hiring in 'Silent Disco' equipment for the KS2 Christmas Party at both schools.

Whilst it was by no means 'silent', the children had an amazing time dancing to three different choices of music! We'd like to say a huge thank-you to the 'Friends' of both schools for generously supporting this project!



St Helen's judged 'Outstanding'

St Helen's was inspected by OFSTED during the last week of term before Christmas and judged to be outstanding in each of the four areas of the framework.

This inspection judgement recognises an 8 year journey of improvement since the school was graded 'Requires improvement' in 2011.

'The school is a nurturing and caring environment. Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. Pupils are keen to do well. They say they love their school.' OFSTED December 2019.



Partnership INSET Day

We started the academic year in September with a joint INSET day for the staff at both schools, looking at the vision of our schools and our partnership.

St Mary's and St Helen's share a very similar vision and each school has 12 values rooted in the Christian faith. St Mary's vision statement includes the words 'explore, enjoy, excel' and St Helen's vision statement is made up of the words 'excellence, enjoyment and achievement.'

We had a really excellent day as a combined staff, looking at our shared vision and values, reflecting on the 'trace that we leave behind' and then working in mixed groups to look at developments that could lead us to increase the trace that we leave behind.

Partnering to excel, enjoy, explore and achieve.



Achieve



Excel

Enjoy

Explore

A joint update from governors at both schools:

Governors have been involved in the partnership from the very beginning. The 'Full Governing Bodies' of both schools were required to agree that we should look at entering into the partnership and governors from both schools lead the working group that agreed the shared values, identified the common goals and produced the partnership agreement. The governors at both schools also appointed the Heads of School as the partnership was implemented.

Since the partnership began, governors have been an integral part of working together through a number of activities. The 'Partnership Board', which consists of school leaders and representatives from both governing bodies, meets regularly. This is primarily to monitor the work that's going on together across the school, and through that the effectiveness of the partnership. We are also able to share ideas for activities the schools can do together and to decide how the partnership will progress. Governors have been involved with joint activities between the schools, including joining staff from both schools on INSET days and the St Helen's governors welcomed the St Mary's governors to one of their regular Governor Days. Governors also regularly keep in touch with staff across the schools to see how they feel the partnership is going and to make sure the benefits are felt by everyone.

We are pleased to see how well the partnership has developed between the schools. The curriculum work going on together and the support and engagement happening between teachers in both schools has exceeded our expectations for this early stage in the relationship. We look forward to continuing to report on the direct benefits to both schools that working in partnership is bringing.

Some updates from Twitter (St Helen's) and Class Dojo (St Mary's):



Mrs. Scriven
St Mary's CE Primary

Jan 24



Thank you to our amazing team for rocking out at our TTRockstar assembly. Thank you particularly Mr Baker, Mr Moon, Mrs Baker, Chloe and William who went head to head in a live competition. These are the days the children will remember!

34 likes 159 views



Mrs. Lane
St Mary's CE Primary

Dec 10, 2019



KS2 choir also enjoyed entertaining the residents of Firgrove residential home yesterday.

22 likes 202 views



St Helen's Alveston @sthelenspri · Nov 29, 2019

Some of our families got up early to join the #youthforclimate protest today! @BristolLive @glosgazette #bravechangemakers



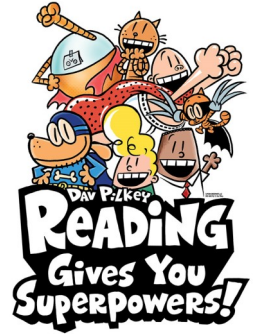
@sthelenspri · Nov 18, 2019

Children who represented the school at a Sportshall this evening. Great attitude, effort and most of all, flying high @sthelenspri



Other Partnership activities:

- Our Reading leaders, Mrs Oakley from St Mary's and Mr Adams from St Helen's have been working alongside leaders from Raysfield Federation to develop the teaching of reading in each school.
- Before Christmas, as part of their topic 'How do we help people belong?' children from Year 3 and 4 learnt about how their local area had changed. They wrote letters to children from the partner school telling them about their local area, what they loved about it and what they had learnt about from their local area study.



Aniah, Y3 from St Mary's said: "After I received a response, I felt like I knew the person already." Charlie, Y4 from St Helen's also enjoyed the experience: "We got to know new names and to find about Yate. It helped us get to know the other school."

- In January, we launched a 'Middle Leader Development Programme' for the Key Stage 1 and 2 leaders in both schools. Over the rest of the year, there will be opportunities for the Key Stage leaders from both schools to work together, supporting each other in their roles and developing themselves as leaders.

Partnership for Excellence
Collaborating at all levels,
building capacity for leadership
and striving for excellence.

Partnership for Enjoyment
Enriching our learning and
experiences, fostering
enjoyment.

Partnership for Exploration
Continuously improving,
innovating and exploring.

Partnership for Achievement
Working together to raise
outcomes, keeping children's
achievement at the very
centre.

