



St. Stephen's School  
and Children's Centre  
*Learning for Life*

## Headteacher's Newsletter

Issue 3

6th January 2026

Dear parents, carers and children

Welcome to the Spring Term 2026. I hope you had a lovely break and that you are coming into this term feeling hopeful and ready for a fresh start. This is my 27th year at St Stephen's and my 15th year as Headteacher and each new term still brings the same sense of pride and purpose.

Strong communication between home and school makes a real difference to how well children settle and learn. If you ever have a question or worry please speak to your child's class teacher first. They work closely with your child every day and can give you accurate information quickly. When we talk directly we resolve things early and children feel well supported.

Sometimes messages on WhatsApp can make small worries grow bigger. A simple conversation usually makes everything clearer. Your children notice how you respond to situations. They learn from your calm approach and your respectful communication. If something is troubling you please come and speak to us face to face or by phone. We will always listen.

At the end of the day we want dismissal to feel safe and organised. The space between the back gate and the KS1 playground can become crowded. Taking a moment to pause if it looks busy helps everyone leave calmly. A gentle pace, kindness to others and patience makes that time much easier for all children and families.

We are continuing to focus on punctuality. Arriving before 8.30am helps children begin the day smoothly. If they have a bike or scooter it is helpful to arrive a little earlier at 8.15am when the gates open, so they can park it safely and still reach class on time.

Thank you for your support and partnership. When children see adults working together positively they learn to do the same. I look forward to a term full of learning, joyful moments and good progress for every child.

Warm regards,

Ms Neena Lall OBE  
Headteacher



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS- Mr Shashankar Jana

Happy New Year 2026!

Welcome back, and happy New Year. We hope your holiday break brought rest and joy as we begin another promising year together.

St. Stephen's thrives because of the strong partnership between our Governors, staff, parents and pupils. Thank you for the hard work, support and commitment that make our school such a special place. Our shared values—honesty, kindness, respect and responsibility—shape our daily life and help our children grow into confident, thoughtful individuals. We are proud of the accomplishments of our pupils and staff, and we are grateful for the OFSTED recognition that reflects their dedication.

Our thanks extend to our families, whose encouragement strengthens everything we do. We encourage parents to stay connected and involved, and we remind our pupils to embrace this year with confidence, curiosity and kindness.

The Governing Board remains fully committed to the safety, well-being and success of every child.

Wishing everyone a year filled with growth and achievement.

Warm regards,

The Governing Board

## STAFFING

As we begin this term, I want to share some important updates.

We would like to thank two members of staff who will be leaving us at the end of this term. Henna Majid has been a much-valued member of the nursery team since she started here seven years ago and will be sorely missed by all who have worked with her - she has had such a positive impact on so many children. Tiffany Chen, who has been an excellent teacher in Red Room for the last term, will also be moving on in January. Thank you both for everything you have done for St Stephen's.

## CHARITY WORK AT ST STEPHEN'S

St. Stephen's Federation continues to provide steadfast support to vulnerable families across our community, offering donations of food, toys and essential items throughout the year. Last term was particularly busy, with several meaningful initiatives:

**McMillan Cake Sale:** Staff showcased their baking skills with an impressive selection of sweet and savoury treats, eagerly purchased by families after school. The event was, as always, a highlight for parents and children, raising £1,025.40.

**Harvest Festival:** Pupils across the federation generously donated food, toiletries and household essentials. Through special assemblies, children reflected on gratitude and supporting those in need. This year's contributions supported St Stephen's Children's Centre Food Bank, the Renewal Programme Food Bank and the Masjid Ibrahim Food Bank.

**Christmas Hampers:** Each year group and staff team created beautifully presented hampers filled with festive treats and luxury items. These were gifted to valued community supporters and



delivered to the Salvation Army, the NHS ambulance service and domestic staff at Newham General Hospital.

**Christmas Toy Appeal:** Working with the Kevin Jenkins Toy Appeal, the Children's Centre Team distributed gifts to 24 of our most vulnerable children.

**Christmas Jumper Day:** Children wore festive jumpers and donated to Save the Children, bringing colour and cheer to the school as they enjoyed their Christmas lunches.

### Year Group Fundraising

Each year group contributes to our school fund through dedicated fundraising activities that help provide new resources and enrich pupils' learning. Last term, Year 2 and Year 5 held their fundraising days:

**Year 2 - Polar Express Day:** Children arrived in pyjamas, took part in drama activities based on their core text and baked shortbread to sell at hometime.

**Year 5 - Evacuee Day:** Dressed in 1940s attire, pupils experienced life during WWII through activities such as building Anderson shelters, planting cress for Dig for Victory and baking ration-era shortbread.

These events raised a total of over £200, which will support our school fund.

### **JACK AND THE BEANSTALK POP UP PANTOMIME**

On Tuesday 9th December, our Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children enjoyed a special pop-up pantomime of Jack and the Beanstalk in the school hall, performed by a theatre troupe from the Kenneth More Theatre in Ilford. The production featured all the magic of a traditional panto - including a spectacular beanstalk that grew from Jack's magic beans and stretched almost to the ceiling, much to the children's amazement. They delighted in joining in with the classic call-and-response, singing along to some of their favourite songs and giggling at the many hilarious jokes throughout the show.

A particularly popular moment was when a few brave teachers stepped into the spotlight as the 'villain landlords', enthusiastically booed and cheered by the children at all the right moments.

The visit has not only brought the story of Jack and the Beanstalk to life, but has also inspired our Reception and Year 2 pupils to become even more confident performers in their own festive productions to parents. It was a wonderful way to celebrate the season and to nurture a love of live theatre in our youngest learners.



## JOY CUP

The Joy Cup is awarded to one child from each class at the end of every term. The recipient is chosen by the teachers and staff who work closely with the class, recognising those who consistently demonstrate a genuine enthusiasm for attending school and fully embrace the values and opportunities offered at St. Stephen's.

As part of last year's, year 6 legacy project, children were asked to create a brand new design for our Joy Cup. Afifah Ali was the very deserving winner and recipient of the first newly designed cup! Autumn term saw all our Joy Cup winners presented with Afifah's design!

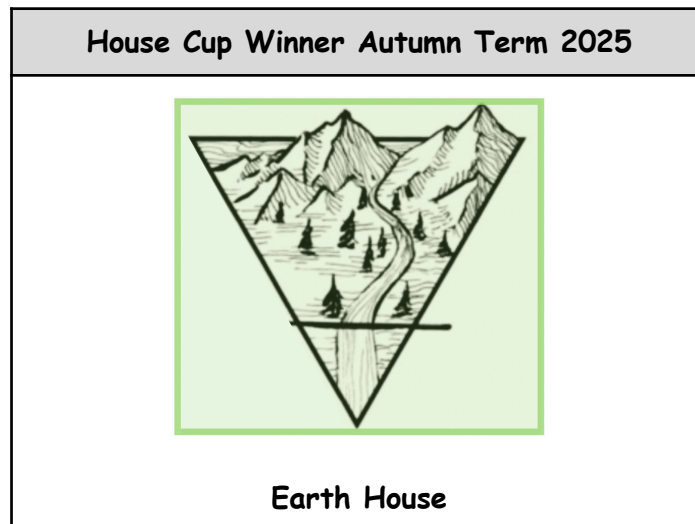
I would like to congratulate the joy cup winners for the Autumn Term 2025:

RJC: Djulia Damous RJR: Ayadh Rishard RNO: Fathima Zahra	1JW: Maidah Mahmood 1LP: Saarah Mulla 1NB: Khalid Mohamadou	2AW: Muhammed Tawhid Azad 2RF: Aliza Chowdhury 2VR: Huzaifa Yeasmin	3CC: Zoya Rahman 3HA: Muhammed Abbas Sharif 3SS: Jalal Syed	4EC: Alaynah Naviya 4JL: Mehra Aliyambath 4ZK: Eesa Saleem	5AQ: Mustafa Miah 5PC: Jasmin Islam 5PW: Husain Vahora	6LD: Zahraa Vahora 6LT: Karam Matharu 6PM: Nicole Hrytsyshyn
---	--	---	--	---	---	---

## HOUSE CUP WINNERS

We are thrilled to share the results of our very first House Cup competition of the Year. This term, all of the children have worked incredibly hard to earn house points for their teams by consistently demonstrating our **WE CARE** values: **Wellbeing, Expression, Courtesy, Acceptance, Respect, and Excellence.**

It has been wonderful to see the enthusiasm, teamwork, and dedication across all houses, and we are so proud of how every child has embraced the new system. Congratulations to **Earth House** for their fantastic achievement and for being the very first winners of the House Cup this year!



To celebrate their success, the St Stephen's House Cup, adorned with Earth House's green ribbons, is now proudly displayed at the front of the school for everyone to admire. We look forward to seeing even more house points earned next term and finding out which House will be victorious in the Spring Term!

## ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Attendance and punctuality are both life skills that they need to develop whilst they are young. It is important that all children establish good routines and habits in preparation for the rest of their lives.

### Attendance

2nd September-11th December 2025	
Year	%
Nursery	84.3
Reception	93.9
Year 1	94.3
Year 2	96.3
Year 3	95.5
Year 4	96.3
Year 5	96.2
Year 6	96.5

*Well done to Year 6 for having the best attendance so far!*

Please note that 100% attendance is the school target for every pupil.

## LOST PROPERTY

We have recently seen a dramatic increase in the amount of clothing and belongings left at school, so we kindly ask families to ensure every item is clearly named so it can be returned quickly.

Lost property bins are located at both the front and back of the school for parents to check at the end of each day but please remember that helping children take responsibility for their own belongings remains the best way to prevent items from going missing.

In the interest of sustainability, any unclaimed items at the end of each week will be donated to appropriate causes.

## HEALTH

It is important that every child has regular health checks so they can learn confidently and feel well. Parents play a leading role in keeping these checks up to date. When health needs are missed children can struggle with reading accuracy, concentration, confidence and sometimes behaviour. Please ensure the following:



### **Teeth**

- Dental check every six months
- Brushing twice daily with fluoride toothpaste

### **Eyes**

- Eye test once a year
- Even if there are no obvious signs please still book a test

### **Ears**

- Hearing check every two years or sooner if concerns arise
- Notice if your child turns the volume up often or struggles to follow instructions

These checks can make a significant difference to your child's learning and wellbeing. If you need support to access services we will help you.

## **SAFEGUARDING**

At St. Stephen's, we know that children learn as much from what they see as from what they are taught. One of the most powerful ways to keep children safe and help them grow into respectful, confident young people is by modelling positive behaviour in our everyday actions.

Children listen closely to the language adults use. Speaking kindly, calmly and respectfully—even during challenging moments—helps them learn how to manage their own emotions and communicate positively with others. They also notice how adults treat people both inside and outside the home. Showing patience, fairness and empathy teaches them how to build healthy relationships, resolve disagreements and respect differences.

## **NURSERY AND CHILDREN'S CENTRE**

The children that started nursery in September are now settled and learning. The Nursery staff are supporting all of our children to develop social skills, for example saying 'please' and 'thank you', taking turns and being kind and caring to others. Please help your child with this by encouraging them to say 'Good Morning' or 'Good Afternoon' when they arrive at school.

The Nursery is encouraging all parents and carers to 'Break the Buggy Habit'. We are committed to encouraging children to walk whenever possible - this will help children to eat well, sleep well and support their physical development.

### **National Year of Reading 2026**

Did you know that 2026 is the 'National Year of Reading'? Reading with your child every day is the single most valuable thing you can do to support your child's well-being, learning and development. Sharing a picture book develops closeness with your child as well as building their vocabulary and sparking conversations. Green Street Library stocks a large range of books for babies and young children - if you join the library you can borrow books for free!

Marie Foley- 07904663072

Meral Sami- 07494067676



### **CONTACT US**

St Stephen's Schools and Children's Centre, Whitfield Road, London E6 1AS

Head Teacher: Ms Neena Lall OBE [neena.lall@st-stephens.newham.sch.uk](mailto:neena.lall@st-stephens.newham.sch.uk)

#### **Primary School**

Tel: 020 8472 7575

Email: [info@st-stephens.newham.sch.uk](mailto:info@st-stephens.newham.sch.uk)

Website: [www.st-stephens-primary.org.uk](http://www.st-stephens-primary.org.uk)

#### **Nursery School**

Tel 020 8586 0147

Email: [childrenscentre@st-stephens.newham.sch.uk](mailto:childrenscentre@st-stephens.newham.sch.uk)

Website: [www.st-stephens-nurserychildrenscentre.org.uk](http://www.st-stephens-nurserychildrenscentre.org.uk)

Federated School Business Manager

Mr Mark Little [mark.little@st-stephens.newham.sch.uk](mailto:mark.little@st-stephens.newham.sch.uk)

Nursery Deputy Head Teacher

Ms Janet Patterson [janet.patterson@st-stephens.newham.sch.uk](mailto:janet.patterson@st-stephens.newham.sch.uk)

Primary Deputy Head Teacher

Mrs Jenna Chapman [jenna.chapman@st-stephens.newham.sch.uk](mailto:jenna.chapman@st-stephens.newham.sch.uk)

Primary Deputy Head Teacher

Ms Georgia Dawson [georgia.dawson@st-stephens.newham.sch.uk](mailto:georgia.dawson@st-stephens.newham.sch.uk)

This newsletter is also available on the school website.

