

Prior's Mill C.E. Primary School Newsletter March 7th 2025

Welcome to the Prior's Mill Newsletter - this is shared weekly and will contain key dates and information, paper copies are available at the office 07.03.25

In This Issue



This week we include:

- Message from Mr Linsley
- School Council
- Sporting Stars
- Musician of the Month
- Digital Leaders
- Attendance
- Worship Theme
- Class News
- Key Dates
- NEW! Picture News (We thought you might like to read 'Picture News' this is shared with children in a class worship every week)

- Contact Us
- Safeguarding

Heads Up - A Job Well Done!



Careers Week

A huge thanks to all the parents, family members, friends and volunteers who attended the school Careers Week this week it was very much appreciated and provided a fun, informative and inspirational week. We had a great week and the children have learned lots about a huge number of careers and what it takes to succeed in the job of their choice in the future. We had a hugely successful careers fair on Thursday and lots of different visitors throughout then week a huge thanks to Mrs Legender for organising such a fantastic event throughout the week.

World Book Day

We champion the fun of reading, because it seriously improves lives. Reading for fun is the single biggest indicator that a child will grow up to enjoy a happier and more successful life – more than their family circumstances, their parents' educational backgrounds or their income.

But here's the challenge, it's at an all-time low, with only 1 in 3 children now saying they enjoy reading. We believe children are more likely to read if they enjoy it, so we're on a mission to encourage them to see reading as an entertaining, social and fun thing to do. We want more children to grow up with a life-long, life-changing habit of reading for fun, and all the benefits this brings.

Although it is fun to dress up and we had some amazing costumes it is important to remember that reading for pleasure is the best way to develop both reading and writing skills.

School Starters September 2025 If you have a child who is eligible to start Reception in 2025 then please get in touch as we can provide you with the contact details for the admissions team at Stockton Local Authority.

Breakfast Club - Early Adopter Scheme We have been selected by the DFE to be one of the pilot schools for the free Breakfast Club Scheme being put in place by the new Labour Government. This will start after the Easter Holidays and last until the end of the summer term, we are currently working out what the implications are and will be getting in touch with parents soon to gauge interest in the scheme. The scheme will be open to all parents and it will provide free breakfast club provision from 8 -8:30am. Please click the link and complete the survey in the email you received.

Shrove Tuesday

This week we have been exploring lent and the importance of Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wedenesday in worship. We discussed the religious aspects but also a general love of pancakes! Harry from Y6 won the best combination with beans and sausages on a pancake! Y5 sampled pancakes with syrup, lemon and sugar and kindly shared with myself and Miss Huddart - thank you Y5!

Virtual Reality

We had the pleasure of welcoming Justin from Edupeople into school to work with our Y3 pupils and use his VR headsets to transport pupils back to Ancient Greece and take part in a fully immersive History lesson. Look at the fantastic pictures below, Justin will be returning to school in the summer term to work with all KS2 Year groups on their own curriculum themes.

QUICK REMINDER: KEY DATES

- 21/3/25 Comic Relief Day
- 26/3/25 Parent Consultation
- 31/3/25 Easter Foodbank Donations
- 2/4/24 Parent Consultation
- 10/4/25 Break Up for Easter Holiday
- 11/4/25 PD Day
- 28/4/25 Return to School

Key Dates additions:

- Y2 Snappy Spring @ Thornaby 18.03.25
- Class 5 Worship 19.03.25
- Class 7 Worship 20.3.25
- Tempest Class Photos for Reception and Year 6 26.03.25
- Year 3 Bake Sale (to raise money for beach litter picking trip) 26.03.25
- MM Production 'Little Princess' 4.04.25



1 - Picture of the Week!

Rory in Nursery having a fantastic time - it was a pleasure to help him clean up afterwards!



2 - Pancake Fun!



3 - VIRTUAL REALITY IN Y3 - ANCIENT GREECE EXPERIENCE











School Council



Mr Farrell has agreed (after some persuasion from the school council) to take part in the Great North Run in September and to raise funds for Guide Dogs for the Blind and our other school charities. We are going to be looking at showing our support by organising a summer fun run.





4 - We have been invited to establish a Children's Safeguarding Council in school. After Easter, Mrs Hanson and Mrs Mackay will work with our School Council representatives to explore the topic set by the Safeguarding Children Partnership. The topic for the next half term is about staying safe in the community. Our School Council will be given the opportunity to ask our KS2 children some questions about feeling safe outside of the home and share their findings with us. All questions and answers will be anonymous.

We are looking forward to working with the Safeguarding Children Partnership with this important topic.

Sporting Stars

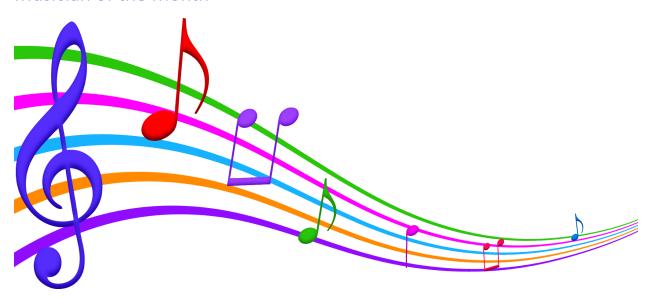




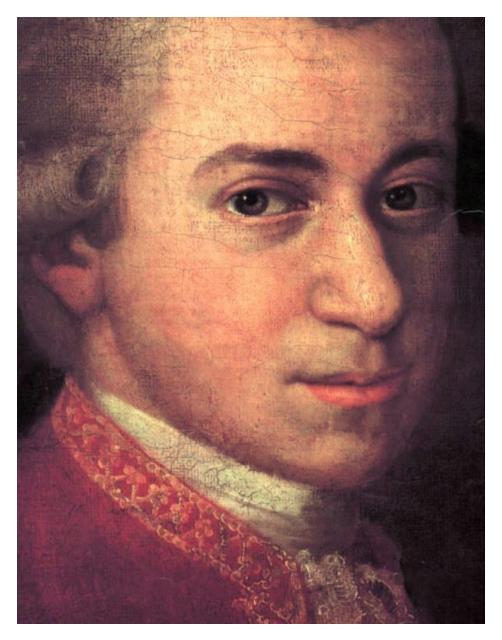
5 - Sports Leaders

Golfing Greats - Thanks to Mr Stokes and Peter from Billingham Golf club for putting on a session after school for our talented young golfers!

Musician of the Month



Home Information Sheet - Mozart



About: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 - 1791) was a prolific and influential composer of the Classical period. Despite his short life, his rapid pace of composition resulted in more than 800 works of virtually every genre of his time. Many of these compositions are acknowledged as pinnacles of the symphonic, concertante, chamber, operatic, and choral repertoire. Mozart is widely regarded as among the greatest composers in the history of Western music. His Requiem was largely unfinished by the time of his death at the age of 35, the circumstances of which are uncertain and much mythologised.

Genres: Classical, Opera, Chamber, Choral

Active from: 1764-1791

Origin: Salzburg, Austria

Digital Leaders - Reading Advice





6 - Hugo (Y3), Felicity (Y4), Luke (Y5) and Joey (Y6) are the new school Digital Leaders.

Parent guide for this week - Spending and Saving

If there are any apps or online sites that parents would like a fact sheet about then please get in touch and we'll try and provide one.

Any safeguarding concerns can be relayed to:

Mr Linsley - Designated Safeguarding Lead

Miss Huddart - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

As a parent or carer you play a key role in keeping your child safe online. Find out more about commonly used social media platforms at

https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/social-media-guides

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

The way we engage with text has changed dramatically over the years. Whether reading captions on social media, <mark>instructions in a</mark> video game or an e-book on a digital device, technology plays a major role in modern literacy. While traditio<mark>nal books</mark> remain invaluable, digital tools can enhance reading skills by making text more accessible, interactive and engaging.

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CHOOSING THE RIGHT

Before integrating technology, consider the types of text that a child engages with. If they need help on occasion, digital reading pens can assist by scanning and reciting words or sentences. These tools are especially useful for students with reading difficulties, and can even be used in exams if they're part of their routine learning process. Proper training and practice are required, but they can be a great help when tackling printed text.

2 READING ON SCREEN

Many devices now allow users to customise text for better readability. Adjusting font type, size and background colour can significantly enhance comprehension. For many readers, white text on a black background is the easiest to see, whereas other styles — such as dyslexia-friendly fonts — are designed to help those who are struggling. Teaching children how to personalise text settings on their devices empowers them to read more comfortably and with greater confidence.

3 ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS

Most modern devices include built-in tools designed to support readers. These features can be found in Settings under Accessibility and may include text-to-speech, speech-to-text and screen magnification functions. Enabling these tools can make digital reading more user friendly, especially for children with learning difficulties or visual impairments, who might have an easier time with spoken language than the written word, or who might simply require a closer look at the text.

(1)

INTERACTIVE READING **PROGRAMMES**

Many digital reading devices, such as Kindle and other e-readers, offer features like word highlighting, adjustable text speed and built-in dictionaries. These tools help learners to break down complex words and phrases while maintaining an appropriate reading pace. Some programmes even allow users to track their progress, making reading a more structured and motivating experience.

VIDEO GAMES AND READING SKILLS

Many video games require players to read instructions, character dialogues and mission objectives, making them an unexpected but effective literacy tool. Games that involve storytelling, puzzles or problem-solving often include large amounts of text – encouraging children to read these texts aloud or discuss them can improve their comprehension and vocabulary in a fun, engaging way.

Catrina Lowri is a qualified special needs teacher and experienced SENCO. She recently launched her own site, Neuroteachers, which offers a library of short, 'how-to' and explanation videos for educators. Catrina also writes and delivers online training and events for multi-academy trusts, businesses, schools and training organisations.

6 SUBTITLES AND **CLOSED CAPTIONS**

Watching videos with subtitles or closed captions is an effective way to enhance reading skills. As children watch their fravourite shows or online videos, they can follow along with the text, gaining a better understanding of how written wor sound when spoken aloud. This is particularly beneficial for reluctant readers, as it exposes them words in a familiar, engaging context. Repeatedly watching content with subtitles reinforces word recognition and comprehension.

USING AUDIOBOOKS

Audiobooks are an excellent way to develop listening and reading skills simultaneously. Children can follow along with the text while listening to a narrator, reinforcing word recognition and fluency. For struggling readers, listening to an audiobook before attempting to read the text independently can boost their confidence and comprehension.

9 TEXT-TO-VOICE TECHNOLOGY

Text-to-voice software reads digital text aloud, making it easier for learners to follow along. Most smartphones, tablets and computers come with this function built in. When enabled, users can highlight a passage or sentence and press Play to hear it read aloud. This tool is particularly helpful for auditory learners and those who struggle with decoding written words.

VOICE-TO-TEXT FOR WRITING AND READING

27 Voice-to-text tools allow users to dictate words, which are then transcribed into text. This feature helps children see the connection between spoken and written language. By using text-to-voice to have their dictated words read back to them, learners can identify mistakes and improve their reading and writing skills simultaneously.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND PARENTAL CONTROLS

While social media provides apportunities for reading, most platforms have age restrictions of 13–16 years old, making parental guidance essential. Many social media videos include captions and comments that can encourage reading. However, it's important to use the platform's parental controls (such as time limits and content filters) to create a safe and educational online environment for children. Encouraging responsible social media use can ensure a balanced and productive approach to digital literacy.

Meet Our Expert



The **National** College®









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Being read to regularly can help the under-fives in acquiring literacy; teaches them the value of books and stories; and sparks their imagination and curiosity. Reading to babies, meanwhile, provides the building blocks of language development and the beginnings of social and emotional skills. Here are our top tips for helping children discover the wonder of stories.







CATER TO THEIR INTERESTS

BUILD READING INTO YOUR DAILY ROUTINE



RELISH THE LANGUAGE

A COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT

TAKE REGULAR BREAKS

RE-READ FAVOURITES

Meet Our Expert



The National College

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Attendance Matters



In accordance with School and Trust Policy any unauthorised absences (that are not subject to exceptional circumstances) will be subject to a fixed penalty notice.

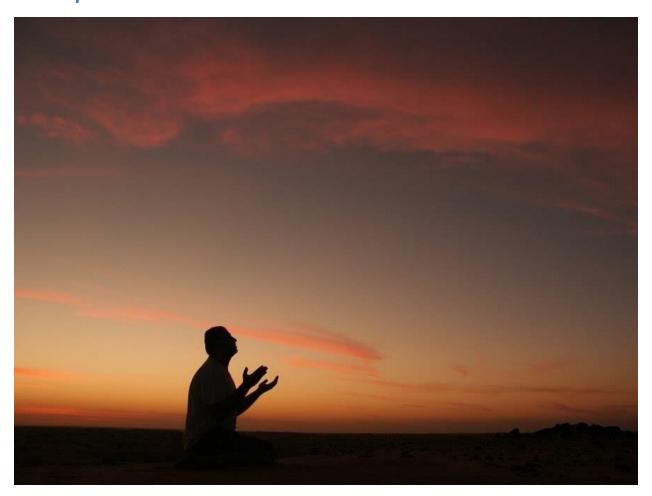
Current School Attendance is 95% this is just below the DFE target of 96%.

We strongly advise that any holiday in term time should be avoided due to the impact of lost learning time on children. Please be aware that leave of absence (holiday) during term time will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances. It is school policy to refer any unauthorised absence due to holiday to the local authority who may issue a fixed penalty notice. This is a penalty of up to £120 per child, per parent and so can add up to a significant amount. The school does not receive any revenue from fines; the money is paid to the Local Authority. In addition, we now have a new system in school for pupils who are late. Pupils must be escorted to the office in the main building and a form completed by parents/carers to sign the pupils in

and indicate the reason for the lateness. This is for our records and also to avoid pupils becoming distressed.

LATE MARKS ALSO IMPACT NEGATIVELY ON ATTENDANCE PLEASE TRY TO BE ON TIME!

Worship Theme - JESUS IS TEMPTED Matthew 4:1-11



At the start of his three-year public ministry, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. Immediately afterwards he went into the desert of Judea, where he remained for forty days, not eating or drinking at all ('fasting'). He needed to be quiet, to be alone and to pray at the start of the work for which God had sent him. He was tempted to use his powers to make people follow him; he was tempted to do things the easy way and not God's way, but he did not acquiesce.

I wonder how Jesus resisted the temptations put to him? I wonder how we can resist doing wrong things if tempted in different ways?

Dear God, may Lent be a time of quiet and reflection that makes me more able to look with honesty at myself and with compassion at the needs of the world. **Amen**



Class News



After School Club made some great Krispy Cakes with Mrs Hitchen!



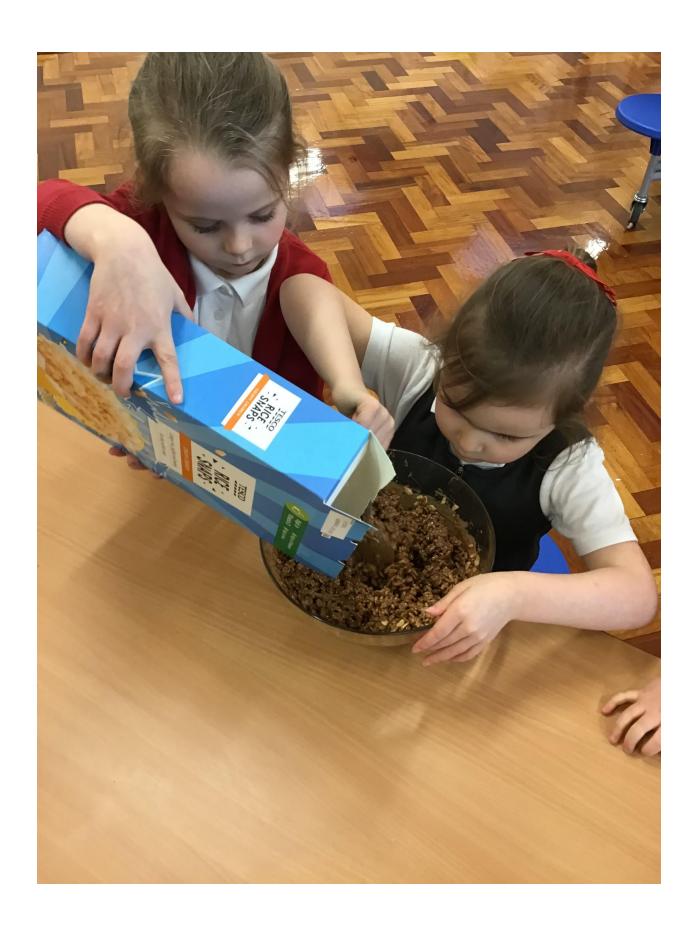
























Nursery – People Who Help Us 2025 (Careers Week)

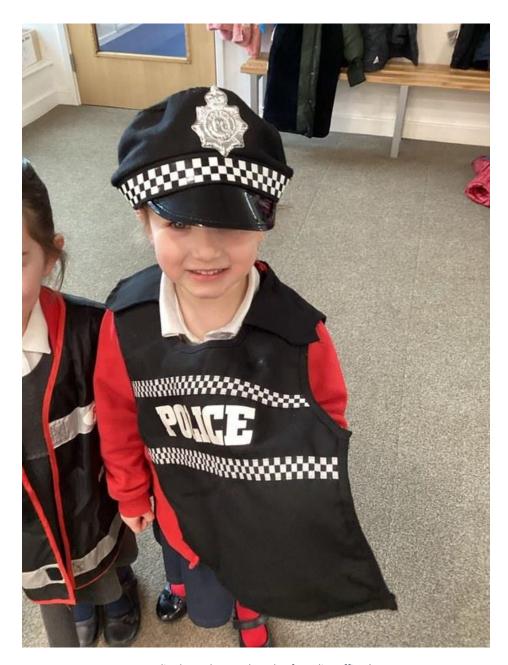
A very exciting week in Nursery to celebrate all our real-life superheroes who help us in our everyday lives. We have loved learning about all the different people who help us and keep us safe.

This week the nursery children enjoyed a visit from Peter our very own lollipop man who talked to them about road safety and the importance of using our looking and listening skills when near roads.



The provision in Nursery has been set up around the theme of 'People Who Help Us' and the children enjoyed taking on the roles of the different occupations such as a doctor, nurse, fire fighter, vet, chef and police officer. We had our very own doctor's surgery with a very busy waiting area!!





7 - Eliza has taken on the role of a police officer!



8 - Amelie is playing the role of a chef in our home corner!

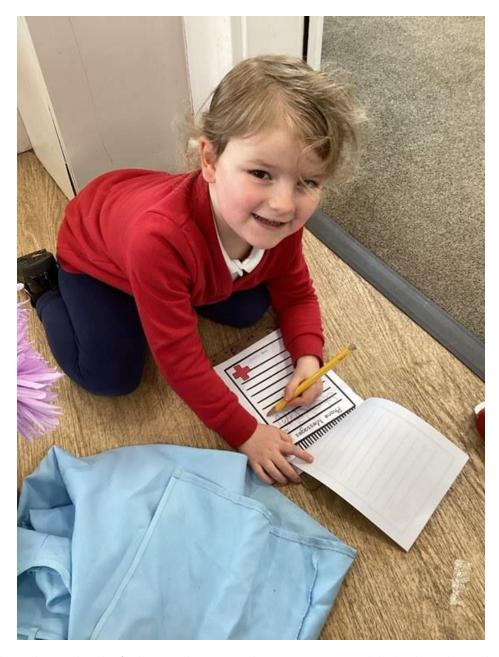




9 - On Thursday we had a visit from Raven's Mummy who is a post lady in Billingham. She talked to the children about her role and different responsibilities. The children took the opportunity to ask her lots of interesting questions and were excited to receive their very own Royal Mail delivery notice and badge! A huge thank you to Raven's Mummy for taking the time out of her busy day to help us learn more about the postal service.



10 - Rory is very busy working in the outdoor mini carwash! He is selecting different brushes to clean the vehicles whilst developing his fine motor skills!



11 - Halle is busy taking on the role of a doctor as she writes out her own prescriptions whilst developing her mark-making skills.

The children consolidated their learning by discussing what job they would like to do when they grow up and drawing a picture to represent this. We had some unique ideas!!

Year 1 had visits from the Fire Brigade and from the RAC as part of Careers Week. The children asked lots of questions and were really interested to learn about our visitors' jobs.













Today, Year 1 were visited by Year 4, who shared their love of reading with their younger peers











12 - We are having the best day ever! We love to dress up for World Book day, we think Miss Akerman does too!!!!

Love class 4



13 - Reception Pictures from World Book Day!

















First week of chess club has been great fun! Lots of determine and intelligent players.

Year 4 had a visit from Jo who is a business consultant. She told us all about her business where she helps other small businesses. We were able to ask her lots of questions about her job and how she started her own business. Jo also gave us lots of advice about how we might be able to start our own businesses when we were older. Lots of us are now budding entrepreneurs!



Key stage 1 look amazing in their costumes! They have had a great day celebrating World Book Day.

























This week our Year 5 and 6 children were lucky enough to attend our Careers Fair and what a great time they had. We had visits from: Sara- a Crown Prosecutor, Ben- a Royal Navy Officer, Suzanne and Louise- NHS Careers, Fatemah and Cinthu- Junior Doctors, Neil Maddison- Football Coach, former Footballer and Commentator, Jessica- Midwife, Jessica and Jade- Environmental Monitoring and Radiation, and Daniel- Chief Superintendent of Northumbria Police. The children asked lots of questions to each of our visitors, gaining an insight into their careers. Thank you so much to all our visitors for Careers Week, who have given up their time to work with our children, they have loved it!







































Key Dates



- 10/3/25 British Science Week
- 21/3/25 Comic Relief Day
- 26/3/25 Parent Consultation
- 31/3/25 Easter Foodbank Donations
- 2/4/24 Parent Consultation
- 10/4/25 Break Up for Easter Holiday
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- 28/4/25 Return to School

Picture News



Collective Worship PowerPoint (4)



What's happening

in the news this week?





Let's have a look at this week's

3rd – 9th March 2025





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The Times newspaper recently asked young people, aged between 18 and 27 (also known as 'Gen Z'), what they thought about their lives and life in the UK. The survey showed lots of views, including that 4 out of 10 young people are proud to be British, and less than half feel that people in the UK are accepting and welcoming towards others.





Think together and talk

What does it mean to feel proud of something? Why might some people feel proud of where they come from, while others may not? How can showing compassion help people feel included?

How can we celebrate the differences and similarities in our communities?





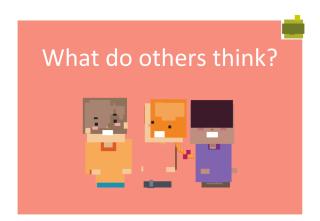
Jesus taught that everyone is important and has a special place in the world. The Gospel reminds us that we belong and are loved. When we remember this, we can shine our light on the people and places around us, helping to build a fair and caring community, where everyone feels welcome, respected, and valued.

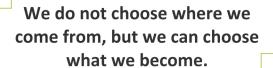


But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.

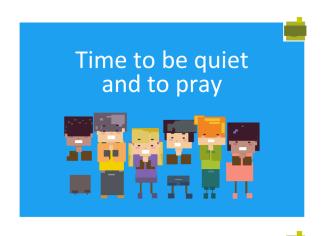
1 Peter 2:9







Stephen Chbosky – author, screenwriter and film



Prayer

Dear God,
Thank you for the places we call home and the
people who shape our communities,

Help us to see the good in where we come from and to celebrate what makes each place special, May we be a light in our communities, working together to make them strong, safe and welcoming,

Amen.





Key Stage 1 class discussion

What is something special about the place where you live?
How does it feel when someone says something nice about your town or country?
How can we show respect to other people's homes and traditions?



Key Stage 2 class discussion

Why do you think fewer young people today feel proud to be British, compared to the past?
What does it mean to be part of a community?
How can we balance being proud of where we come from with respecting and learning from others?

1 Peter 2:9 talks about how special God's people are - how can knowing we are valued help us show kindness to others?

Time to worship

This Little Light of Mine Click here for the hymn online







This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine,
This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine,
This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine.









The light that shines is the light of love,
Hides the darkness from above,
It shines on me and it shines on you,
It shows you what the power of love can do.







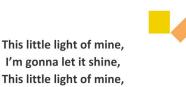


Shine my light both bright and clear, Shine my light both far and near, In every dark corner that I find, Gonna let my little light shine.

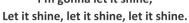








I'm gonna let it shine, This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,





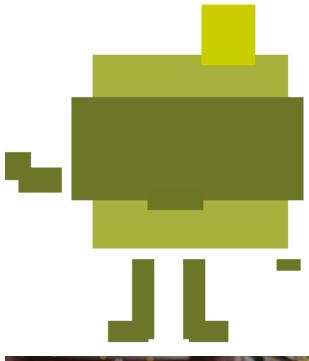


Monday, He gave me the gift of love,
Tuesday, peace came from above,
Wednesday, He told me to have more faith,
Thursday, He gave a little more grace,
Friday, He told me to watch and pray,
Saturday, told me just what to say,
Sunday, He gave me the power divine,
To let my little light shipe

This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine,
This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine,
This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

Collective

Worship





Pupil involvement

Ask the children to take a moment to think about something that represents who they are. This could be a place, a tradition, a favourite activity, or something special about their family or community. Invite volunteers to draw their special something on a large whiteboard.

Encourage the rest of the group to look carefully at the drawings and try to work out what they represent. Have volunteers explain their choices, sharing why their object is important to them. As they speak, encourage the other children to listen carefully. Do they have anything similar in their own lives?

As a group, reflect on how our identity is shaped by lots of different things, including our experiences and where we come from.

Finish by asking: what makes you proud of where you come from? How can you care for your community and

Bible Link: 1 Peter 2:9

Christian Value: Compassion

Theme: Feeling Proud

Pupil talk

What does it mean to feel proud of something? Why might some people feel proud of where they come from, while others may not? How can showing compassion help people feel included?

How can we celebrate the differences and similarities in our communities?

Think

The Times newspaper recently asked young people, aged between 18 and 27 (also known as 'Gen Z'), what they thought about their lives and life in the UK. The survey showed lots of views, including that 4 out of 10 young people are proud to be British, and less than half feel that people in the UK are accepting and welcoming towards others.

Jesus taught that everyone is important and has a special place in the world. The Gospel reminds us that we belong and are loved. When we remember this, we can shine our light on the people and places around us, helping to build a fair and caring community, where everyone feels welcome, respected, and valued.

Invitation prayer

Dear God,

Thank you for the places we call home and the people who shape our communities, Help us to see the good in where we come from and to celebrate what makes each place special, May we be a light in our communities, working together to make them strong, safe and welcoming, Amen.

Key stage 1 class discussion

What is something special about the place where you live?

How does it feel when someone says something nice about your town or country?

How can we show respect to other people's homes and traditions?

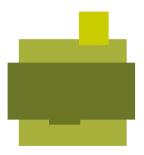
Key stage 2 class discussion

Why do you think fewer young people today feel proud to be British, compared to the past?
What does it mean to be part of a community?
How can we balance being proud of where we come from with respecting and learning from others?
1 Peter 2:9 talks about how special God's people are how can knowing we are valued help us show kindness to others?

Worship song



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Contact Us



If you would like to contact us about anything in the newsletter or need an additional conversation then please don't hesitate to catch me outside on the yard or through making an appointment at the office.

Clifton Avenue, Billingham. Stockton-on-Tees, TS22 5BX

Tel: 01642 650 426

Email: office@priorsmill.org.uk

Visit us on the web at https://priorsmill.org.uk/ 1

Safeguarding

The school safeguarding policy is on the website and a paper version can also be requested from the office. Safeguarding is at the heart of all we do at Prior's Mill CE Primary School.

Designated Safeguarding Lead - Mr Linsley

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead - Miss Huddart

¹https://priorsmill.org.uk/

EMERGENCY HELP DURING THE WEEKEND / HOLIDAYS

During the weekend / holidays, whilst your children are playing outside with friends, we would

recommend that your child knows where to go to for help if they need it. This might be a

grandparent or family friend, as well as at home. It is important that your child knows how to

call the emergency services for help.

We have been advised that you talk to your child about risk-taking behaviour and the potential

consequences of any decisions that they make whilst away from home. Give your children the

confidence to say "no" to taking part in any risky or anti-social behaviour with their peers.

Of course, we want the children to enjoy the weekend and part of that is becoming more

independent from parents; however, we want all our children to return to school fit, well and

safe after the weekend.

TEWV Crisis team (CAMHS & Adults) has now changed.

There is a new system and people must call 111- option 2 - this is the 111 Mental Health line

& call handlers will transfer to the local crisis team appropriately.

The Children's Hub is the first point of contact for anyone who has a concern about the

welfare or safety of a child or young person.

The Children's Hub

Stockton: 01642 130080

childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk²

Crisis support line

If someone you know, is experiencing a mental health crisis call NHS 111 and select the mental

health option.

Billingham & Stockton Borough Foodbank

4-6 West Precinct

Billingham Town Centre

²mailto:childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk

Billingham TS23 2NH

07583 575522

https://billinghamstocktonborough.foodbank.org.uk

info@billinghamstocktonborough.foodbank.org.uk³

If you have any welfare or safeguarding concerns relating to a child in school during term time, please do not hesitate to contact —

Mrs ALLISON HANSON

PUPIL WELFARE & SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

Prior's Mill C/E Primary School

Billingham TS225BX

01642 650426

office@priorsmill.org.uk

School Vision

As an inclusive Church of England primary school, we welcome children and families of all faiths and none to be part of our school family which has a distinctly Christian character and ethos. At Prior's Mill, we encourage everyone to discover, flourish and grow in their talents, nurturing their God given gifts and potential. We work with passion to foster a love of learning, a love of community and personal resilience. Following in the footsteps of Jesus, we are a school where kindness, forgiveness, respect and honesty underpin our words and actions.

Biblical Narrative - The Parable of The Mustard Seed - Mark 4:30-32 (NIV)

"What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade." **School Values**

We give our best - We are kind - We are honest - We are respectful - We forgive

³mailto:info@billinghamstocktonborough.foodbank.org.uk