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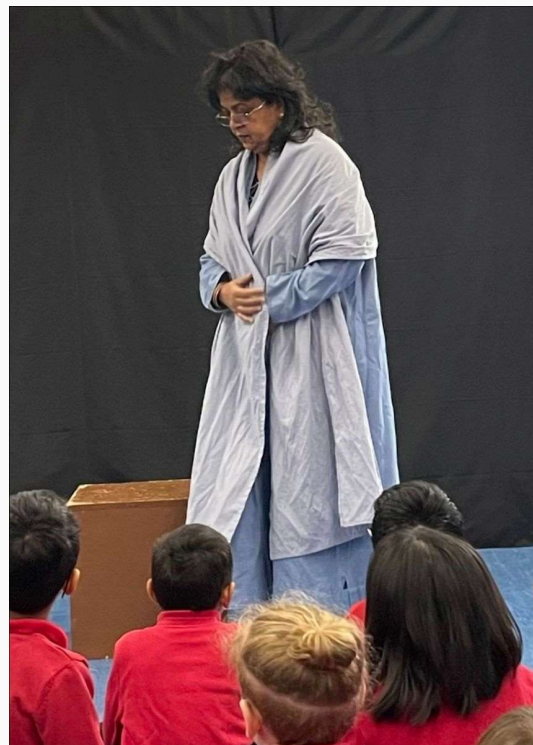
## Simon Ellingham

DIRECTOR'S WORD

Those who have been kept in touch for a number of years via our prayer update will, I'm sure, feel that this term has been possibly the most significantly impactful for a long time. If our mission is to tell as many pupils and staff as possible of the existence of our wonderful and loving God, found through His Son Jesus, then we have certainly done that!

These newsletters are an opportunity for me to give you a summary of all we have done, with the help of the Holy Spirit, in and around the borough, and to ask you to continue to pray so faithfully. This one is LONG, and I make no apology for that! God is doing so much in our schools, and I believe there is an extraordinary movement developing, and I really, really want as many people as possible to be praying for God's Spirit to move across our borough, changing hearts and lives, so that parents will be asking each other 'what's happened to my child?'

So I've asked Maisie and Abby for their own thoughts, and I've added mine. It makes for a wonderful, exciting read, and I pray that you will print this off, and keep coming back to it to read again and again, and pray again and again.



## **PRIMARY**

Maisie and Abby have formed a dynamic partnership, and together they have unified the primary work so that the assemblies, workshops and lessons are seamlessly woven into a coherent primary strategy. They and their fantastic team of volunteers (thanks once again folks) have delivered assemblies and lessons across the sector, and we have had so many 'wow' moments together.

This is Maisie's report....

The Primary Team have been BUSY this academic year, with them leading workshops for approx **2,585 children since September this year** - and that is just 1 term! Here is the breakdown:

**Y1 Creation Treasure Hunters:** Approx 270 across 3 schools

**Y3 Bible Explorers:** Approx 700 across across 11 schools

**Y2 Discover Christmas:** Approx 705 children across 12 schools

**Y5 Ordinary Extraordinary Christmas:** Approx 910 children across 14 schools

There have been SO many stories I could share about how God has worked in and through the team, children and myself throughout the past term, but if I had to pick just one, I think it would have to be from 1 Y5 boy after his class' Ordinary Extraordinary Christmas Workshop. He was very excited to come up to me at the end of the workshop after he was given his 2 glow sticks.

At the end of each Y5 Workshop, the children are given 2 x glow sticks to take home at the end of the school day. One glow stick is for them to keep and the other is for them to give away to someone who has not been in the workshop space today. It gives the children an opportunity to firstly remember that Christmas is not just about getting things, but sharing things with others too. Secondly, it encourages the children to share the Christmas story with someone else as they follow the example of the shepherds who, after hearing the Good News of Jesus' birth, told EVERYONE about it! One Y5 pupil very excitedly came up to me at the end of the workshop as the children were lining up to leave. He told me very confidently that he got a glow stick from Sutton Schoolswork a few years ago and that came with a little card like this one. He still has that card from all those years ago! And he was DELIGHTED that he would have another 2 glow sticks and a new card to add to his collection!

This may seem like a really small story but it was a real reminder to myself and Abby that God is working through the children of Sutton and through SSW in AMAZING ways as children are being given opportunities, not only to hear Gospel Truth at school, but to take what they have learnt about Jesus into their homes! We are all about planting seeds for God to water and this is an exciting reminder of how God is working! GOD IS GOOD!

In terms of prayer for the coming Spring term, please pray for the final 2 Easter Experience cast slots to be filled - we are SO close now! Also pray for Easter



Experience preparations as a whole as rehearsals begin and final details go out to schools. Finally, please pray prayers of protection over the AMAZING volunteer team we have! May they have good health and may they start the new year feeling refreshed and ready for the term ahead!

God be praised for the AMAZING work He has done!

And Abby's.....

We visited 37 schools this half term to share 51 assemblies; hard to get accurate numbers, but I estimate more than 15,000 primary aged children.

### Highlights

- Pam joined Rev Hannah Thomson to share a Christmas assembly at Cheam Common Juniors in December. We have been invited in March to lead a SSW Easter assembly back at CCJ!
- Our assembly team noted that when we asked children what they enjoyed about Christmas time, the most popular answer was 'spending time with friends and family'. We were so blessed and encouraged by this!
- At the end of one of our Year 5 Christmas workshops, a class teacher told me that there were a few Christian children in her class; she saw them exchanging enthusiastic nods and grinning at each other during the workshop. How wonderful that we can encourage and support pupils who are growing up in Christian homes, as well as those who are learning something new!





## **SECONDARY**

Without doubt the most significant part of this term has been the new relationship with Good News For Everyone (formerly Gideons). As most of you know, I have been offering New Testaments at the end of my sessions with Year 8 pupils across the borough, stating very clearly that they are for anyone who is genuinely interested in having their own, and only to take one should they believe that they will actually read it. I'm delighted to report that the current total number taken is over 650, with 4 lessons still to go!!!

And I have been astonished by the number of times pupils telling me that they are reading theirs. So many stories, but one stands out as particularly meaningful. A year 8 girl, not currently a believer, told me last week that the boys in her group are often getting their little red books out and reading passages to each other. She also said that if my intention was to get people to open the book and find out about Jesus, then it was certainly working!

And all our Christian groups in schools have seen some growth. What has been incredible is the sudden opening up of an opportunity in Harris, a school previously closed to us, and a group of pupils have started gathering together to seek Jesus in that school on a regular basis. In addition, Greenshaw have a group of Year 9 and 11s who have grown from 0 to 15 in just a few weeks, Cheam High years 9-11 have a regular 13 coming together when there had just been 5, and our other groups at Greenshaw, Cheam High, Sutton Grammar, Carshalton Boys, Carshalton Girls and Overton Grange all see new faces on a regular basis. We now have opportunities opening up at Oaks Park and Glenthorne schools, please pray that these may develop quickly and we may be able to encourage growth in these as well. And of course, there are groups at schools that currently SSW don't go into to support as they are running very well under the leadership of staff and senior pupils. Please pray that they too may prosper in terms of their message of life found in Jesus being heard by as many as possible. I've delivered lessons on GSUS (Christian Living), Persecuted Christians, Knife Crime, County Lines, Science and Faith, Healthy Relationships and Resurrection of Jesus across 5 schools, and I'm booked in for Year 7 workshops in 2 schools and Year 11 in 1 next term, plus assemblies at another.

And a shout out to our contacts across the teaching fraternity. Thanks to all those teachers who help at CUs, lessons and assemblies, and to those staff members who are praying together for their particular school.



## CHURCHES

Maisie and I have been really busy this term! We've attended Worcester Park Baptist, Carshalton Baptist, Wallington Baptist, Vineyard, Cheam Baptist, St. Peter's and Good Shepherd to tell others about our work, and I've met with several leaders to chat through how we can support each other in our shared efforts.

Our financial support continues, and we are always grateful to God for what He provides for us, and that we can pay our bills! However, we are very much aware that this cannot be taken for granted, and we are constantly praying for funds to enable us to do what we do. Please pray that the incredible support we have been receiving will continue, and maybe even grow so that we can do even more.

One desire we have is that we could employ a full-time secondary worker to take that element away from me, as I'm currently that role as well as that of Director. To have a dedicated employee in this position would make a lot of difference. Please pray with this very much in mind...

And so 2025 comes to a conclusion. And, once more, I report that God is very, very present in our schools. Thousands of pupils and staff have heard about Him this term, and have been offered the chance to find out more about Him, and hundreds have taken up that offer. Pupils are talking to each other about Him, and asking each other 'Could this be true?' Staff members have enquired about knowing Him, children have been excited to know someone is coming in to their school to talk about Him, and church members have been encouraged to pray to Him, asking Him to do even more. What a year! Please continue to pray that this Christmas hundreds of people across the borough will seriously ask 'Can I get to know this God?', and will seek, and will



find...

Thank you for praying for us.

Simon







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