St Matthew's Primary School

# AUTUMN NEWSLETTER



# St Matthew's Primary School



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• Belong • Believe • Achieve •

# A Letter from our Headteacher

**Dear parents and carers,**

As we come to the end of this term, I wanted to take a moment to thank you for the warm welcome you have given me in my first term as Headteacher. It has been a real privilege to lead such a caring and welcoming school community.

I have been impressed by the focus, learning behaviours and manners shown by our children every day. They are building on our school vision and shared values, and it is wonderful to see them growing in confidence, thinking carefully and working together. The school feels very positive, and I can see progress being made in classrooms across the school.

I have been proud to show many visitors around the school this term, including prospective parents, the Director of Education for Luton and our school Governors. Their comments reflected the warmth, pride and purpose that our children and staff bring to school life.

It has also been lovely to welcome so many parents and carers to our Parent Consultations and Celebration and Class Assemblies. Seeing so many of you share in your child's achievements makes a real difference to them, and I am grateful for your support.

Please do not forget that our leaders are always happy to talk with you. If you have a question or would like to share something, please come and chat with me or another member of the leadership team at the gates.

We have many exciting things to look forward to over the coming weeks, including our famous festive singing, Christmas dinner, Winter Crafts and lots of classroom fun. I hope these moments help our children to celebrate their hard work and the community we share.

Thank you once again for your partnership and support this term. On behalf of all the staff, I wish you and your families a restful break when it comes and a Merry Christmas to those celebrating .

Warm regards,

**Victoria Rayner**
Headteacher

# Christmas at St Matthew's

## DECEMBER 2026

### Friday 4 December
- Sycamore Class Assembly (2.45pm)

### Monday 7 December
- Year 6 **Winter Crafts** (9.15–10.15am)
- Year 4 **Winter Crafts** (2–3pm)

### Tuesday 8 December
- Year 6 visit to Tring Museum (Oak and Wolf)

### Wednesday 9 December
- Year 6 visit to Tring Museum (Eagle and Orchid)
- Year **3 Winter Crafts** (9–10am)
- Year **1 Winter Crafts** (2–3pm)

### Thursday 10 December
- Year **2 Winter Crafts** (9–10am)
- Choir singing at DART

### Friday 11 December
- Daffodil Class Assembly (2.45pm)

### Monday 14 December
- Year R **Winter Crafts** (9–10am)
- Year 5 **Winter Crafts** (2–3pm)

### Tuesday 15 December
- Year 4 visit to Library Theatre (1–3.30pm)

### Wednesday 16 December
- School Christmas Dinner
- Choir Singalong Concert at The Hat Factory (6.30pm)

### Thursday 17 December
- Festive Jumper Day
- Christmas Singing Assemblies

### Friday 18 December
- Term ends
- 2.00pm pick-up






# Little Steps, Big Beginnings!

Starting school is a big milestone for our youngest children, and we are so proud of how well all of them have settled in to their time at St Matthew's.

We started our school year by visiting all of our children at home, before they had their very first day of school. Since then, the children have been busy getting to know the staff and their new friends, exploring all of the different areas of the classroom and the playground, and developing their learning skills. Children have enjoyed lots of fun activities where they've been practising drawing, writing, cutting and lots of fine motor activities. In Maths we've been working on counting carefully and understanding numbers to five.

Highlights of the term have included our traditional autumn walks, where we explored nature and seasonal changes around the whole school, and our annual visit to St Matthew's Church to learn more about the Christmas story. It's been a fantastic start to life at St Matthew's for everyone!




# Paws, Claws and So Much More!

Year 1 enjoyed an exciting visit from Teaching Talons, meeting animals ranging from familiar dogs to lizards that many children had never encountered before!

The visit supported our learning about fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. We have been naming and describing animal body parts, using vocabulary such as scales, claws, tails, feathers and teeth, and exploring how these help animals survive.

We have also been sorting animals into carnivores, herbivores and omnivores according to what they eat.

Meeting real animals brought our science learning to life and gave us plenty to talk about.

What a wonderful animal adventure!




# Pictures, Pop Art and Performances!

Year 2 have been getting creative! In Design and Technology, the children have been exploring how to make moving pictures, combining their design ideas with mechanisms that bring their work to life.

In Art, we have been exploring Pop Art through the work of Roy Lichtenstein. His bold colours, strong outlines and comic-book style have provided plenty of inspiration for our young artists.

We are also looking forward to our class assemblies in November and December. These are lovely opportunities for the children to share their learning with families and show how their confidence is growing.




# From Book Pages to Paper Creations!

We have been turning old book pages into autumn decorations with help from Year 5!

Each half term, a different Year 5 group plans an activity for children at school or people in our local community. Their challenge is to encourage more people to visit Brown Books and enjoy reading.

This group chose origami — the art of folding paper into shapes. After learning from volunteers at the bookshop, the Year 5 children taught us how to make our own creations.

Each of our Year 3 classes made a different shape, using pages from old books that would otherwise have been thrown away. Our creations are now decorating the bookshop for autumn!




# A Tomb-full of Learning!

Year 4 have been stepping back in time to explore Ancient Egypt! In History, the children have been mummifying tomatoes to help them understand the process of mummification and its importance to the Ancient Egyptians.

Our Egyptian topic has also inspired some creative writing. The children have written poems about Egyptian tombs, using descriptive language to capture the mystery of these ancient resting places. It has been a fascinating journey of discovery!

Year 4 have also been learning how the Ancient Egyptians made bread. They linked this learning to the steps we follow when baking bread today, from measuring and mixing the ingredients to kneading the dough, leaving it to rise (proving) and baking it. The final step was tasting the bread!

There is more excitement ahead with our Egyptian Day in December! We look forward to bringing our learning to life and exploring even more about this fascinating civilisation.




# Strumming Strings and Battle Cries!

Year 5 have been making themselves heard! In our guitar lessons, the children have been developing their musical skills and discovering the enjoyment of learning to play an instrument together.

Our Anglo-Saxon topic has brought a different kind of sound to the classroom! The children have been exploring battle cries, thinking about how warriors used powerful words to inspire courage and intimidate their opponents.

These lessons have given everyone opportunities to be creative, work together and try something a little different.

From musical notes to mighty voices, Year 5 have been enjoying some lively learning!




# Ready to Lead the Way!

Many Year 6 children aspire to become school prefects. During the first half of the autumn term, those interested took part in a rigorous selection process, beginning with a letter of application. Teachers then shortlisted candidates for interviews, where their responses to questions from the Year 6 team helped staff select seven pupils from each class.

Our prefects take on important responsibilities, including helping in other classes during morning registration and patrolling areas of the school to encourage sensible behaviour at break and lunchtimes. They also undertake special tasks, such as showing visitors around the school.

Recognisable by their burgundy T-shirts and enamel prefect badges, they are expected to be ambassadors for the **St Matthew's Way**.

Congratulations to all our successful candidates. We look forward to seeing you lead by example!



# STAFF in the SPOTLIGHT

**A warm welcome to the new members of staff who have joined the St Matthew's team since the start of the school year in September:**

- Miss J. Armstrong – Admissions & Attendance
- Miss H. Siraz – Finance Officer
- Mrs S. Jackson – SENDCo Assistant
- Miss R. Peck – General Assistant for Complex Needs/ATCC
- Miss X. Christodoulou – SEN Teaching Assistant
- Mrs A. Heffernan – SEN Teaching Assistant
- Miss Ummeah Johura – SEN Teaching Assistant
- Miss A. Khan – SEN Teaching Assistant
- Miss M. Khan – SEN Teaching Assistant
- Miss T. Nicholls – SEN Teaching Assistant
- Miss N. Nour – SEN Teaching Assistant
- Mr D. Razlae – SEN Teaching Assistant
- Mrs D. Adespea – Lunchtime Supervisor
- Miss A. Ali – Lunchtime Supervisor
- Ms S. Ijaz – Lunchtime Supervisor
- Ms N. Melgarejo Torralba – Lunchtime Supervisor
- Miss S. Noon – Lunchtime Supervisor
- Miss H. Taj Wali – Lunchtime Supervisor
- Mrs P. Uddin – Lunchtime Supervisor
- Miss M. Smyth – Cleaner




**We're delighted to welcome you all and look forward to working together to support our children and families.**

**We said goodbye to a number of colleagues at the end of the last school year. A few more members of our team have also moved on to pastures new during the autumn term:**

- Mr Alex Henry – PE Teacher
- Mrs Arsha Mohammed – SEN Teaching Assistant
- Mrs Sabina Kausar – Cleaner
- Miss Madalina Hont – Cleaner

**We thank them all for their hard work and the contribution they have made to life at St Matthew's. We wish them every happiness and success in their next chapter.**




Most families change schools at the standard transition times, e.g. Year R New Starters / Year 6 to 7 High School Transfer, etc.

You may be one of our families who has changed schools at a different time, for example when your child moved from Year 3 to Year 4. Or you might have completed what is known as an "In-Year Transfer", with your child joining part way through a term.

We are delighted to share the **BELONG** framework web-resource with you. The pilot stage of the resource, which our school has agreed to take part in will run until **11th March 2027**.

The information included in the framework is based on data collected as part of the **School MOVES project** at the **Universities of Birmingham and Warwick**. As part of the project, we have gathered what children and young people, their families, schools and local authority staff have told us about what is helpful and what could be improved when pupils move schools. **Some families will recall taking part in a questionnaire during the last school year as part of this.**

The **BELONG** framework includes three platforms: one for schools, one for parent/carers and one for children and young people:

Framework for **schools**:
**https://schoolmoves.bham.ac.uk/the-belong-framework-schools/**

Framework for **children**:
**https://schoolmoves.bham.ac.uk/the-belong-framework-children/**

Framework for **parents and carers**:
**https://schoolmoves.bham.ac.uk/the-belongs-framework-families/**

**If you require further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Shaheen Hanif, Senior Family Worker at St Matthew's Primary School.**

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

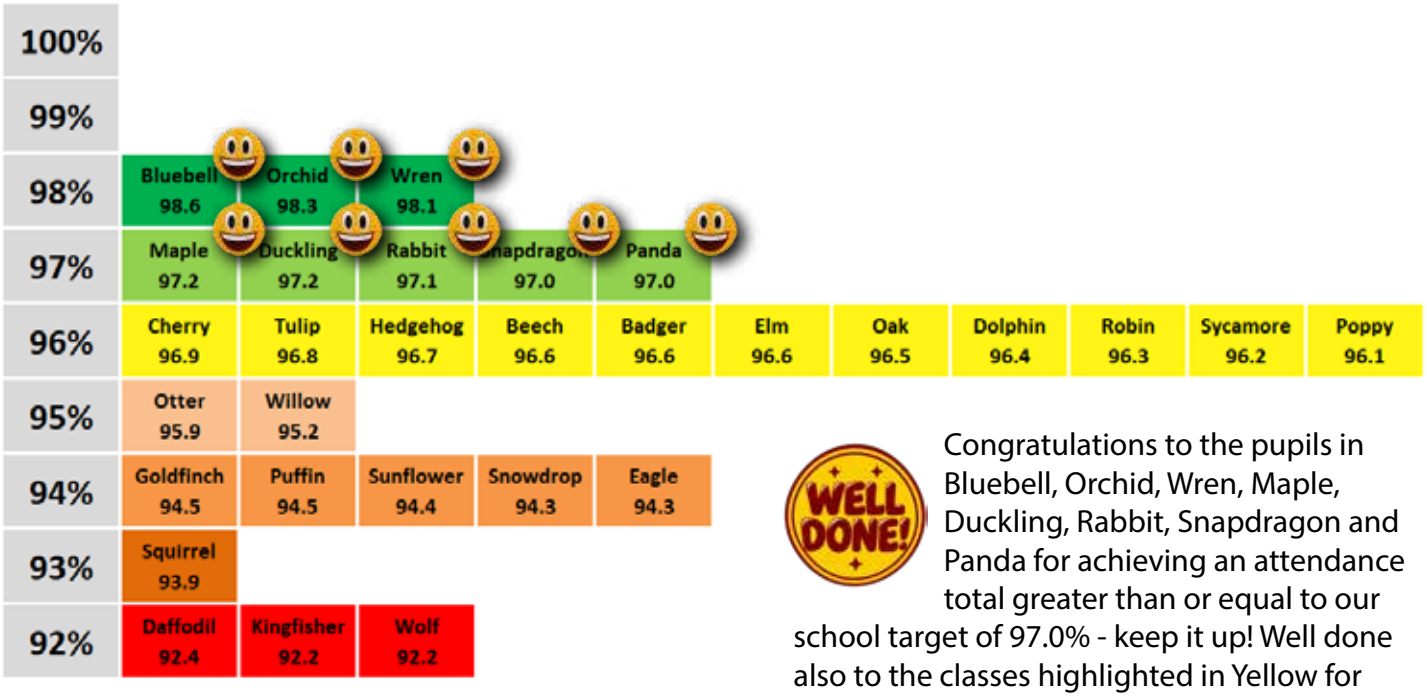
BELONG

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

# ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Attendance was strong across 2025/26 with a total of 95.4%. We have set a target of 97% for this school year (2026/27) and attendance remains a school improvement priority for 2026/27.

The chart below shows the attendance percentages for the Autumn Term 1 (2 September 2026 - 22 October 2026)







Congratulations to the pupils in Bluebell, Orchid, Wren, Maple, Duckling, Rabbit, Snapdragon and Panda for achieving an attendance total greater than or equal to our school target of 97.0% - keep it up! Well done also to the classes highlighted in Yellow for achieving an attendance within 1% of our school target.




Our school choir continues to go from strength to strength! They started the term with an invitation to sing at the **LUTON150 Proms in the Park** celebrations at Stockwood Park. Since then, they've been practising their **Young Voices** songs, ready to sing at **Wembley Arena** in February. They've also been learning some old Christmas favourites and some new songs to share at their **Christmas Singalong Concert** at **The Hat Factory**. You might even hear them on your way to the airport as they'll be singing for passengers taking the **Luton DART** shuttle from Luton Airport Parkway.

# FLOWER UNIVERSE

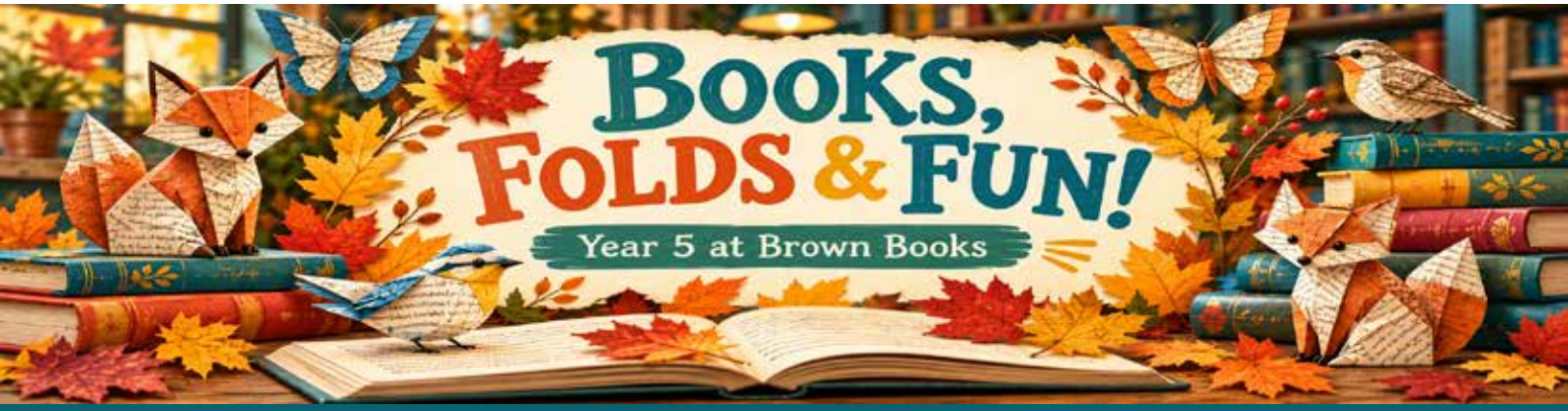
**Recently, a group of Year 5 children have been learning how to arrange flowers with local florist Ruth Baker. They worked hard each week to create beautiful dried flower bouquets and plant pots.**

The children opened their own pop-up shop outside the front office. They made everything themselves, advertised their sale around school and planned how to get people interested. They also used their maths skills to work out how much money they could make after paying for materials.

Their shop was a huge hit! Everything sold out in record time, raising an amazing **£115** to help fund more fun school projects this year.

Thank you to everyone who came along and bought something. A special thank you to **Ruth Baker** from **Ruth Baker Flowers on Hightown Road** for helping the children, and to **Bedfordshire & Luton Comunity Foundation** for supporting the project.

**Well done, Year 5 – what a brilliant team effort!**




This term, groups of children have been working with our local bookshop, **Brown Books**, on an exciting project!

Each half term, a different group gets to plan an activity for children at school or people in the local community. Their challenge is to help more people visit the shop and enjoy reading.

The most recent group chose **origami — the art of folding paper into shapes**. They used pages from old books that would otherwise have been thrown away, giving the paper **a new life!**

The children visited Brown Books, where volunteers taught them how to make the shapes. Then they taught younger children how to make their own.

Each Year 3 class made a different shape. Their creations remained in the bookshop for autumn!

Have you visited Brown Books yet? It is a great community resource with books for all ages and lots of fun activities to try!



**We marked Anti-Bullying Week at with our annual Odd Socks Day. Everyone was encouraged to wear odd socks! It's always a great way to celebrate what makes us all unique in Anti-Bullying Week! Odd Socks Day is delivered in partnership with CBeebies and CBBC.**

**The school has adopted the following definition of bullying:**

**'The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.'**

**During the week, the children took part in activities along the theme of 'break the silence'.**




Thank you to everyone who donated a mountain of food and other items for Luton Foodbank as part of our harvest celebrations.

We reached our target of 1,000 items! That's a thousand reasons to say a huge THANK YOU to our St Matthew's families.

Your generous donations will have helped Luton Foodbank support local families who are finding it difficult to afford their food shopping. Every item makes a difference, and together we've shown how much our school community cares.




Thank you also for supporting our involvement in the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

Our sealed canisters containing the proceeds of the sales of wristbands, reflectors, pencils, rulers, rubbers and snapbands were collected the organisers the day after Remembrance Day and at the time of publishing this news letter, we are still waiting to hear the total we collected. **Watch this space!**

# "WRITTEN HERE"

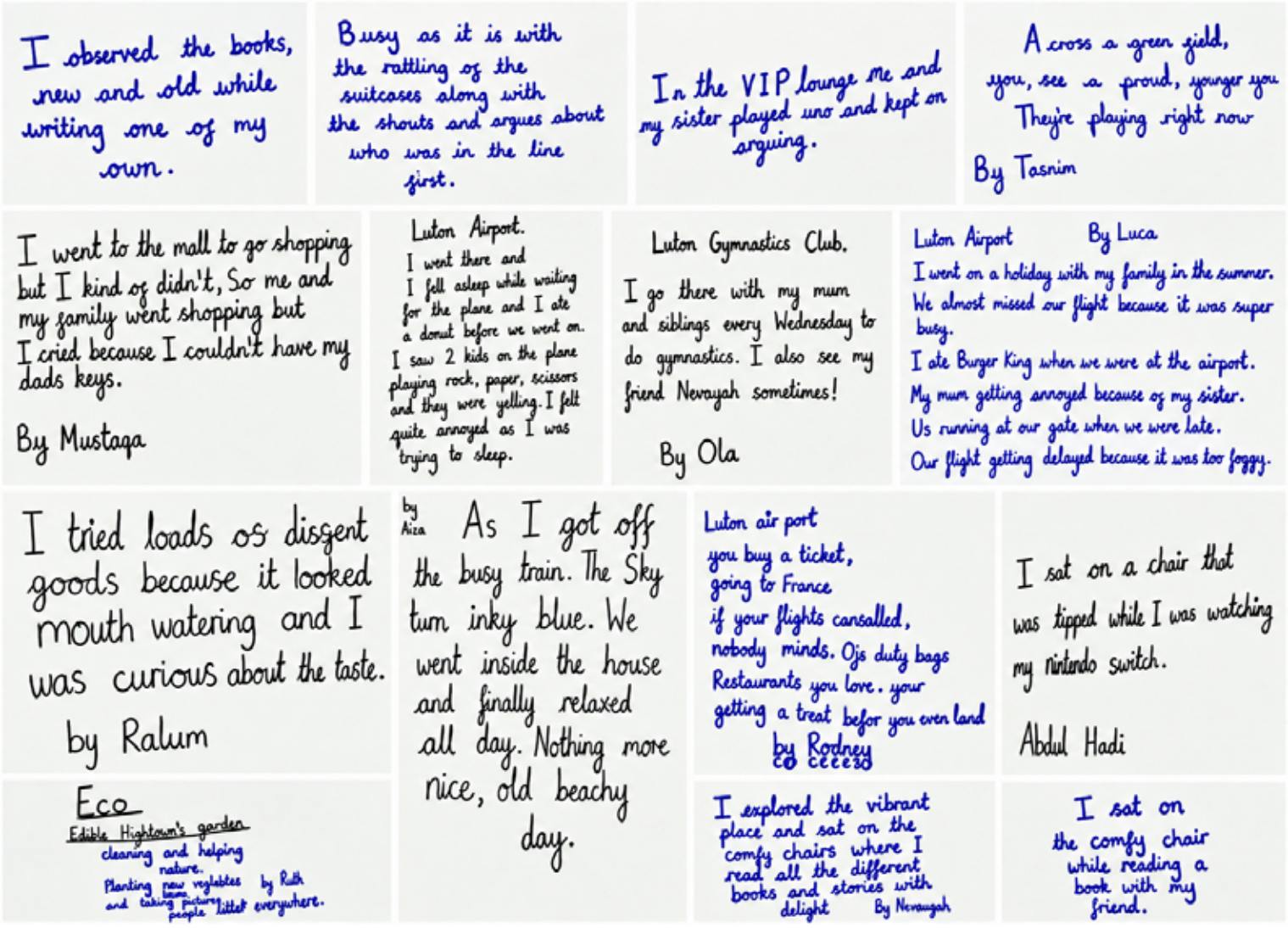
As part of a Heritage Open Day exhibition at the Hat Factory in Luton town centre, a group of our children had the exciting opportunity to take part in a special writing workshop with Luton Culture Trust, .

The exhibition celebrated everyday life in Luton, past and present. Participants were challenged to capture a memory, moment or detail about life in our town in 30 words or fewer – proving that sometimes a few carefully chosen words can tell a big story!

Our children worked with Jakub Rokita, Creative Talent Project Lead, alongside Mr Parker and Mr Chaplen, to explore their own memories and experiences of Luton and bring them vividly to life in just 30 words.

We were incredibly impressed by the children's creativity and the thought they put into every word. Even more excitingly, many of their finished pieces were then proudly displayed at the Hat Factory as part of the exhibition!

It is a wonderful opportunity for our young writers to contribute to a celebration of Luton's heritage – and to see their words become part of our town's story.



# Annual Christmas Gift Shop

Our annual Christmas Gift Shop will be taking place near the end of term, kindly supported by donations from our friends at Aldwickbury School in Harpenden. We are very grateful for their continued generosity and for helping us bring a little extra Christmas joy to families in our school community.

We know that Christmas can put additional pressure on family budgets. If you feel your family would benefit from the Gift Shop, please get in touch with our Family Worker, Shaheen Hanif, who will be happy to talk with you and share further details.

Please call 01582 723970 ext. 2028 or email shaheenhanif@smps.uk.






Since the beginning of the school year, representatives from Luton Council's **Housing Solutions Team** have been visiting St Matthew's Primary School each week to run a **Housing Advice Surgery**.

The service offers families early advice and support with housing concerns, including overcrowded or unsuitable accommodation, rent arrears and the risk of losing their home.

The surgery takes place at school every Wednesday, from 9.00 to 11.30 am, giving parents and carers a convenient opportunity to discuss their concerns and explore the support available. For futher information contact our Family Worker, Mrs Shaheen Hanif.

If you already have an assigned Housing Officer, please continue to contact them directly.

# Christmas in High Town

## CHRISTMAS FAYRE
## 5 DECEMBER

**1:00PM TILL 5:00PM**
**WITH LIGHT SWITCH ON AT 4:30PM**

**FREE TO ATTEND**
**HIGH TOWN ROAD**








**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:**

THE HIGH TOWN COMMUNITY

Brown Books

ST MATTHEW'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Luton