



# Brentwood Schools Christian Worker Trust Newsletter, Autumn Term 2023

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**"Serving school communities by providing Christian learning and support"**



## I'm Dreaming of...



Some years ago a well-known department store ran a series of Christmas adverts with the tagline "Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without...", filling in the blank with things like "...a jumper from Granny", "...stuffing your face" and "...lots of lovely stuff delivered to your door!"

From a Christian perspective, of course, Christmas literally wouldn't be Christmas without Jesus "Christ" (meaning the anointed or chosen one), and we are once again excited about the many opportunities we have in this wonderful season to help school pupils explore the story and meaning of the birth of Jesus.

So, in the words of a famous seasonal song, "I'm dreaming of..." (and hoping and praying for!) a Christmas in which lots of children and young people get to consider and reflect on the Biblical Christmas story. And I'm grateful for your support and interest as you read this newsletter. I also wish you a very happy Christmas.

Ian Kemble, Director of Schools Work

## Schools Work Sunday

is on Sunday  
4th February 2024.

This is an opportunity for local churches to celebrate, raise awareness of and pray for the Christian work that goes on in our local schools through various people and groups, including BSCWT.

Please mark this in your diary. More information will be available nearer the time.

## Welcome to Evie, our new Project Administrator

Following our search last term for the right person to be our new Project Administrator, we are delighted to have been able to appoint Evie to this role. Thank you to everyone who supported us with this search. Evie has got stuck in straight away and is doing a fantastic job getting our Christmas projects booked and organised with local schools and churches. See below for more information...



Firstly, I would like to introduce myself - my name is Evie, and I am the new Project Administrator for BSCWT, taking over from Gelila. I would like to thank all the schools and churches for their enthusiasm in booking Christmas sessions for both Year 2 and Year 6. We have had a great response this year and are looking forward to delivering these

Christmas projects from late November through to the end of term. At the time of writing, we have 32 Christmas sessions booked in all and we will be working with approximately 1016 pupils during this period (see Sue's 'Christmas Workshops' article on page 2).

Evie Bartlett, Project Administrator

## VACANCIES

We are currently looking for new volunteer Associate Workers to help us with our work in schools, especially our lunchtime clubs (see page 3). We are also keen to hear from anyone who feels they may be suitable to join our team of Trustees. For more details, please visit [www.bscwt.org/vacancies](http://www.bscwt.org/vacancies).

## 8 things we are doing with schools this term.....

- 17 'Christmas Wonder' sessions
- 15 'Darkness to Light' lessons
- 76 Assemblies in 29 schools
- 15 OT/NT Mini lessons
- 37 lunchtime club sessions in 4 schools
- One-to-one pupil support in 8 schools
- A 2-day whole-school prayer space in a primary school
- 'Curiosity Trail' (outdoor prayer space) in a primary school

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## Whole-school Prayer Space

Before the half-term break, our team of staff and volunteers were welcomed

into St Mary's School to run our annual two-day prayer space. The theme this year focussed on four of Jesus' parables illustrating what the Kingdom of Heaven is like: the 'mustard seed' pictures it as a place of welcome and protection; the 'treasure' and 'pearl of great price' illustrate its value above all things; the 'great feast' shows it is a place of plenty and celebration to which we are all invited; and the 'doors' tell us that it is very close.

This year the zones were set up in the school, putting us right at the centre of the school community for both days. At the zones, the children engaged in reflection and big thoughts, and it was wonderful to notice how the zones sparked interest and anticipation as well as conversations with staff and children passing by!

*Sue Evans, Lead Schools Worker*



St Mary's School prayer space - photo used with permission

## CURIOSITY TRAIL



In the summer term a new project called Curiosity Trails was launched in a primary school. Are you curious to find out more?.....(read on)

- A playground trail at lunchtimes
- Year 5 pupil Trail Monitors
- Trail Monitors responsible for the Trail
- Themes: Wonderful World, Sky
- More themes: Calming nature and Planets
- To get curious about the world and universe
- To wonder who or what made the world
- To relax and be calm
- 92 pupil comments made in notebooks
- 99 world gallery pictures completed!
- Ribbons tied to represent feeling calm
- Balls used as planets in a quiz

Curiosity Trail 2 recently started this term at the same school, with the themes: What size is God? What size are we? What's inside us?

*Frances Coe, Schools Worker*



Pupils in deep thought at our 'Curiosity Trail' outdoor prayer space!



St Mary's School prayer space - photo used with permission

## Christmas Workshops

"Christmas Wonder" is a reflection on the Biblical Christmas story, exploring its themes in relationship to ourselves and the world we live in. The children undertake activities at different zones, thinking about questions such as: 'Which of the story's characters would you like to be?', 'What are the good and hard times in your life?', 'What would be good news today?', 'What gifts can you offer?', and 'How can you be light in the world?'

"Darkness to Light" is an interactive telling of the Biblical Christmas story for infants. Using puppets and a 'knitvity' set, we tell the story of God's great plan to turn what is 'sad into glad', dressing up as shepherds and following the star with the wise men. There is a theme of dark and light running through the lesson, and the children are asked to spot which events or situations in the story they think are dark or light.

*Sue Evans, Lead Schools Worker*



A 'knitvity' set used in our Christmas workshops

## Secondary School Assemblies

We continue to have the amazing privilege of being asked to speak in assemblies at several local secondary schools. This term we are sharing some stories and reflections on the themes of 'What does it mean to respect one another?', 'How important is it to serve others?' as well as 'How to get through the stress of exams'.

*Ian Kemble, Director of Schools Work*

## Lunchtime clubs

Our lunchtime clubs in schools offer a unique opportunity for pupils to learn more about Christian faith and explore what the Bible has to say.

We currently run clubs in two primary schools and two secondary schools. We would love to be able to start more clubs in more schools but we need more volunteers to help us to achieve this. If you think you could potentially be part of a team helping to run lunchtime club in a school, please get in touch.

*Ian Kemble, Director of Schools Work*

## Pupil Support

Pupil support is one of our key areas of work and our team currently serve 8 local schools in this way. The majority of pupil support work is conducted on a one-to-one basis, and it is a privilege to have the opportunity to listen to, and support, these young people pastorally. The beginning of a new school year often means we have new students to meet and get to know. Creating an atmosphere of trust, with no judgment, is vital in helping these students openly share the challenges they are facing. It is always encouraging to receive feedback from students at the end of our time together. One student recently shared how her "happiness drastically improved" with the sessions and she said, "I learned to love myself and control my overthinking". We thank God for providing the opportunities to serve in this way.

Holly Coleman, Schools Worker



### Feedback from pupils we've been supporting:

"I have learned that I am not worthless."

"You gave me stability at a time when I couldn't predict one day to the next. I really will be eternally grateful for the support you've given me."

### Feedback from a school staff member:

"Thank you for all your support throughout the year and your hard work that has truly benefitted the students."

### Feedback from a Head of Year:

"It really helps me to know that our students have your continued support."

## Primary School Assemblies

Building on our assembly theme from last year ('God's 2<sup>nd</sup> Greatest Rescue Mission'), this academic year we are exploring 'God's Greatest Ever Rescue Mission'! We will be thinking about what Christians believe about who needs rescuing, why, what Jesus has done and what this means for us today.

In the first part of this term, we told the Parable of the Lost Sheep, to help the children to understand what God was trying to do in this 'rescue mission'. It was great to be able to share with the children how God is like the shepherd and how He loves us and longs for us all to be close to Him. In the second part of this term, we will be telling the Christmas story and explaining how the Bible tells us that God made a plan a long, long time ago about a Rescuer called Jesus to be born on earth.

Alison Carmichael, Schools Worker

## OT/NT Mini

Both Barbara and I have been leading OT (Old Testament) and NT (New Testament) Mini lessons in local primary schools this term with pupils in Years 5 and 6. These lessons are the brainchild of "Walk Through the Bible", and teach an overview of the Bible in 5 weekly lessons. Each lesson covers 8 stories with accompanying hand signs and words, to help the children to remember what they've learned and to gain a greater understanding of the big picture of the Bible. These lessons are great fun and involve lots of acting, dressing up and imaginative use of props. In one school, we heard that the children were practicing their hand signs and words whilst on the coach on a school trip!

Alison Carmichael, Schools Worker



### Feedback from school staff re LifeSpace:

"Just wanted to say how fantastic LifeSpace was on Tuesday – you all did an amazing job and the kids seemed so engaged. What an incredible team you are. We are very lucky to have you with us."

## LifeSpace

At the end of the summer term, we had the privilege of running 'LifeSpace' as part of the Year 10 Careers Day with pupils at Shenfield High School.

Around 200 pupils visited 'LifeSpace', where our Staff and Associate Worker team guided them through 8 zones with display boards and activities to encourage them to think about their characters and personalities, what is important to them, their skills and passions, life direction, the impression they leave on others, what they would like to let go of, their hopes and dreams and how faith features in their lives.

The pupils engaged well with the topics and interesting discussions took place. School staff shared how good they felt it was, that pupils had the opportunity to explore and reflect on life questions they often don't get the chance to consider, especially before future decisions are made when starting Year 11.

Fiona Mason, Operations Manager & Schools Worker

### Feedback from Year 10 students re LifeSpace:

"LifeSpace helped me to understand more about myself."

"LifeSpace was very helpful as we aren't usually given the opportunity to reflect on these themes."

Holly leading a zone at LifeSpace



Frances with pupils at LifeSpace



Fiona introducing LifeSpace



## VIEW FROM THE CHAIR:

As I write this, we have just celebrated Harvest in our churches and schools. At this time, we sometimes sing the hymn 'We plough the fields and scatter'. This reminds me of our work in the Trust and how we are ploughing and scattering the 'good seeds' in our local schools. I am always blessed by the next line in the hymn, 'But it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand'. We may not see the immediate impact but these seeds that are scattered are fed and watered by God's hand and in His time there will be a large harvest.

We thank you for your continued support, be that in prayer, by joining us in schools or financially, all of which has enabled these seeds to be planted.

Please continue to pray for the work and for the Trustees as we look forward to and plan for the future.

**We still need Trustees with the right skills to join us and for new sources of income to enable the current level of staffing to continue.**

*Mick Bastable, Chair of Trustees*

## Finance Update from the Treasurer & Trustees



The Trust continues to be grateful and thankful to all individuals, churches and charitable trusts for their continued generous support of BSCWT working with the young people in our local schools.

To the end of September, 6 months into this financial year, regular income was £30,753 and expenditure was £59,267 giving a deficit of £28,514. The deficit is covered by previous legacies and one-off larger donations.

**In order to continue the work of the Trust we are dependent on donations from individuals and churches alike. If you are a UK tax payer, you may be able to make your donations go further by allowing us to claim gift aid. The charity would receive 25p for every £1 that you give.**

If you are not currently a regular donor and would like more information on how to become one, or would like to make a one-off donation, or are a current donor and would like to allow us to claim gift aid on your donations, please do contact me on [treasurer@bscwt.org](mailto:treasurer@bscwt.org).

Please continue to pray that the current opportunities remain open and also for new opportunities so that we can take every advantage God has given the Trust to communicate with the young people in the local schools.

*Claire Lim, Treasurer*



**Thank you** to everyone who came to our *End-of-Year Celebration and Open Morning* at the end of last term. It was great to have you with us at the BSCWT Base as we gave thanks to God for everything He did through the work of BSCWT during the last academic year.

## How can you be involved?

*If you are a Christian with a passion for schools, education, children and young people, and think you might be interested in being involved, please get in touch with us at the BSCWT office. Please join with us to:*

**GIVE:** BSCWT depends on the continued generosity of people who support us financially. If you'd like to support the work financially, please:

- Set up a standing order or a donation via your online banking. Please contact us for a Gift Aid Declaration form, if applicable (or download one from [www.bscwt.org/downloads](http://www.bscwt.org/downloads)).
- Contact us for a standing order mandate (or download one from [www.bscwt.org/downloads](http://www.bscwt.org/downloads)).
- Donate online at [www.stewardship.org.uk/partners/20028156](http://www.stewardship.org.uk/partners/20028156) or send a cheque to our office.
- For on-line banking/standing orders, please contact the BSCWT office for our bank account details.

*If you no longer wish to receive communications from BSCWT, please contact us via the office at [office@bscwt.org](mailto:office@bscwt.org) to be removed from our circulations.*

**PRAY:** We believe praying for our local schools, children and young people is really important. Please contact us to:

- Request our weekly prayer email, termly prayer calendar and newsletter by email or post. Contact us at [office@bscwt.org](mailto:office@bscwt.org) or 01277 523522 or visit [www.bit.ly/BSCWTconsent](http://www.bit.ly/BSCWTconsent)
- Start a prayer group for schools in your church or start/join a prayer group for a particular school.
- Just pray — on your own or with others!

**VOLUNTEER:** There are over 40 people who give their time and energy to volunteer with BSCWT:

- Our **Associate Workers** volunteer with us in schools, working with children and young people.
- Our **Trustees** oversee the running of the Trust.
- Our **Support Teams** assist the Staff and Trustees by doing important tasks in areas such as prayer, finance, human resources, policy-writing, events, monitoring and publicity.
- Our **Church Reps** help us to liaise with our local churches.
- We are also open to applications from people interested in doing an internship or work experience with us.



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