

Malawi newsletter July 2013

This has been another busy year for both Old Bexley and Napache School and there are many things to tell you about as the link continues to develop.

The most important part of the link as always is for the children in both schools to learn about each other's lives and to understand that although our way of life is very different we are all part of one world. The children in the picture below have been looking at a picture of an English town and making a list of questions they would like to ask about life in this country.



Starfish Malawi

Without Starfish Malawi the link with Napache would not exist and they continue to support and advise us. They have recently launched a new website and if you would like to read more about their work go to www.starfishers.net

October 2012 visit

Mrs Herbert and I visited Malawi in half term and spent the week at Napache School. For me this was the third visit but for Mrs Herbert the experience was a new one. We were instantly overwhelmed by the warmth and enthusiasm of the welcome we were given by the children and staff. It is very clear that the

friendship and support of Old Bexley School means a great deal to the people at Napache even though they have very little idea of how we live. In the picture you can see some of the children having a good look at the English visitors!



Container

In February we sent a consignment of essential school stationery and games equipment in the Starfish container to Malawi. The container always takes several months to arrive but it reached Malawi last month and the contents have been taken to Napache. We also sent underwear for the girls and this has been distributed amongst the pupils.

Shoesday Tuesday

The recent Shoesday Tuesday was very well supported and raised £ to help Starfish provide shoes for children who at present have none. Some of the children at Napache will benefit from this.

Attendance

School attendance has improved over the last few years and Gift Asiki, the head is certain that this is due to the provision of good quality writing materials - and proper footballs.

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Sewing machines

Two years ago we sent hand sewing machines to Napache so that some of the young people could be trained in a skill which may help to earn them a living in the future. They now have five machines in good working order and in use.

Monica Makowa, deputy head

Monica Makowa visited us in June and was very interested to learn about life in this country. She loved meeting the children and has taken many ideas back with her to share with her colleagues. The picture shows her setting off with Year 3 to visit Kelsey's farm where she was able to compare methods of cultivation with those of her own community.



Gardening

The children and members of the community have received training in gardening methods in the hope that they may be able to improve the soil conditions. If you would like to see a clip of the training taken by Starfish go to You Tube and search **Napache farming God's way.** Meanwhile at Old Bexley a gardening club has been started and the children have enjoyed preparing the soil and planting seeds in the raised beds outside the classrooms.

Sponsored walk

Starfish will be organising their annual sponsored walk at Bewl Water on September 21st. This is always a lovely day out and if you don't fancy the twelve mile circuit of the reservoir there is always a boat trip back from the half way point. Some members of staff will be taking part and it would be great to see some Old Bexley children there too. Further details are on the Starfish website.

The proceeds from the sponsored walk go to support all the work Starfish do in Malawi but unless you are told otherwise all the money we raise at Old Bexley goes to Napache School.

Teacher's house

You may remember that we helped the community to build a teacher's house so that the authorities would allow another teacher to be employed. The picture below shows Kingsley, a new teacher, with his wife and daughters, Faith and Edith outside the house where they now live.



Thank you for your continued support for the children and families at Napache and the interest you show in their lives. I look forward to bringing you another update in the new school year.

Mrs Gibbon

