

Dear Friends of St. Anthony's Nursery School, Malawi ☺ Nov 2006

It is with great happiness that I write to let you know the nursery school celebrated its 4th birthday last month and all is well in the little village of Chilumpha. I have just returned from a busy 2-week visit to Malawi and the staff and children are all healthy and happy.

My kind Mum accompanied me on this visit and with her help I achieved all the tasks on my list. After a fairly tough visit last October I am pleased to say there were no food shortages in the village this year and Charles, the original gardener, who has been quite poorly is much stronger and fitter thanks to treatment at Zomba hospital.

As always I had the task of registering new children for next years Class B. This time we decided to increase our intake from 30 to 40 students, so in January 2007 we will see 40 new children start and 30 children move up from Class B to Class A. Every year I am always trying to improve the education at the nursery and increase the positive impact the school has on the community and this year's visit was no exception. After observing the hour of 'fun time' the children receive I decided to adjust the timetable and structure of this to make sure half of this hour is spent outdoors and half indoors. Previously the teachers allowed the children to run round the playground for a full hour but through the new timetable the children get to let off steam but then have a quieter session inside using puzzles, building blocks, cars etc. In the playground Mum and I were encouraging the staff to teach the children how to skip, throw and catch, shoot into the new netball hoops and play hopscotch!

The nursery team continues to work hard and they all seem to enjoy their roles and responsibilities at the school. Meria (the reserve teacher) and Ousmane (the gardener/night watchman) both had little baby boys in August & September - their sons are called Cosmas and Horece and are absolutely adorable. Mum and I were tempted to do a Madonna and bring a baby home! Wages were all reviewed and increased this year and fertiliser given as a gift to make sure the staff's maize harvests do well. I was also very delighted to take out 60 new aprons for the children, these were so kindly made by Debi Knight, and the children looked fantastic in these brightly coloured outfits - I hope you agree from the photos!

Structurally the school is strong and thankfully the building needed no repairs, the roof is holding out under the heavy rains received each year. We just left Ousmane with the task of painting the playground railings and re-painting the swing and slide.

Financially the nursery is being well looked after through all your kind donations and monthly standing orders. The nursery bank accounts in Malawi are earning good rates of interest, the savings account actually receives 14% interest so once I transfer the money to Malawi it does very well! Without your support the school would not be about to commence its 5th year of education so thank you all for helping me and allowing the children to receive two years of free nursery education - it does make a difference to their start in life and I am extremely proud to see the school going so strong.

All is well for me in London and I am still busy working at the charity in Islington and making the most of what London has to offer.

I would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year and thank you once again for all your donations and gifts - St. Anthony's Nursery is a very happy little school as 2006 draws to a close.

Thank you.

With very best wishes,

Gina x





Learning to read (& grin!)



Playing with some of the new toys



Girls enjoying skipping in the playground



The Nursery Team 2006



Cheese!



Trying out the new post office desk

