

**Dear Friends of St. Anthony's Nursery School, Malawi
December 2017**



Another year has flown by, I hope this finds you well and 2017 has been kind.

We have been busy unpacking and settling into our new home in Suffolk, all is well and the boys are happy - Sebastian started at primary school in September, they grow up so quickly!

Thankfully another good year in Malawi and all good news to report. In July I was delighted that a trainee doctor, Maddy, was able to visit the nursery school during her placement in Malawi. Here are a few words that Maddy shared with me after her visit:

"Gina, I have just had the most beautiful morning at your nursery. The children and staff are wonderful – I've taken lots of pictures and dropped off your parcel. The children seem very happy indeed. A teacher from St. Anthony's Boys Primary School came to greet us and said that the children from the nursery always do well. All seems well organised and runs to a good schedule – was lovely to see."

So a very uplifting, reassuring update from Maddy – some of Maddy's photos are included on the back of the newsletter. I had a long chat with Maddy on her return to England, she had a very warm welcome at the school and sat through some lessons, she told me the teachers are good at both settling the children and getting them involved. On the day she visited they were learning numbers 1 to 10, it was well organised and although the children are a lively bunch she had no worries or concerns. There was an emphasis on playing and having fun. All the teachers got on well with each other (hurrah!) and it was a highlight of her stay in Malawi. As you can imagine this was exactly what I wanted to hear and makes me very proud.

I mentioned last year that we had started to provide porridge due to the food insecurity in Malawi. We have continued to provide this throughout 2017 as it is good to know the children are at least getting one hot meal every day at the school. It is an extra cost but totally worth it as I feel strongly that the children will do so much better if they have full tummies and can concentrate while at the nursery.

During the Spring the staff arranged for general repairs to the school so we purchased a new wheelbarrow, lots of paint and plywood and asked Fenwick the carpenter to fix some of the window panels – lovely to know Fenwick is well as he was the carpenter who helped build the nursery in 2002.

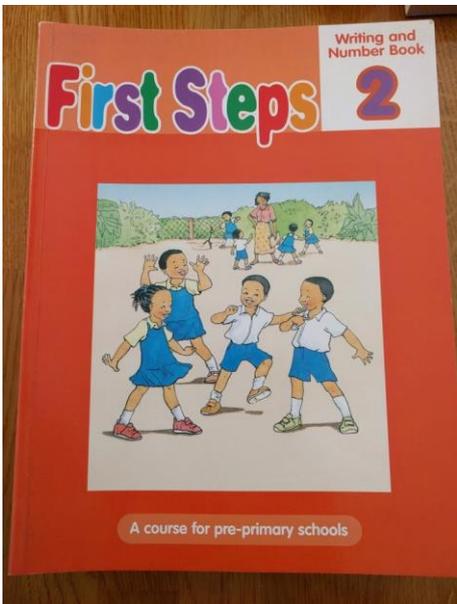
Over the summer I took delivery of 1,000 First Steps Writing & Number books printed specially by Macmillan Books (photos overleaf). I sent a year's supply out to the school ready for the new academic year – thankfully they arrived safely in Zomba. While I was sorting books in July, Martha (the Headteacher) registered 74 children for the September intake of the school – we only have space for 40 so 34 are on the waiting list, clearly a huge demand to attend the nursery and I am thinking through if we can take in more children. All new starters received their mosquito net when term started.

In the last couple of weeks, I have learnt that Vincent at Zomba Diocese is leaving his role as Education Supervisor – this is a shame as he has been fairly good at communicating/updating me by email (although the staff tell me he doesn't visit them very often!) I await news of his replacement but I have heard the Diocese has no funding for his position – the staff and I (via text messages) are working on a solution.

As always, I really couldn't keep up the good work without your support and kindness, thank you so much.

Wishing you all a lovely Christmas and a very Happy 2018.

With all my best wishes, *Gina* x



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Thank you

