

Smuffies Report: 2025

The Smuffies team of Kim, Anne, Pamela, Claire and Pauline and support from Ana has continued throughout 2025. All volunteers have DBS certificates and Kim has Diocesan Leadership Safeguarding Training. No other volunteers have been forthcoming so many thanks go to the team who work hard to ensure the sessions run weekly, especially when some cannot attend due to illness, holiday or other commitments.

Subs for the sessions continue at just £1 per adult and the group is known for its open and friendly welcome and the accessibility of its prices, especially for childminders and those with more than one child. Our numbers have risen slightly across 2025, with 10-12 adults per week and sometimes as many as 20 children.



Our Alphabet & Colours theme which began in autumn 2024 was continued through spring and summer 2025, ending with 'pots of gold at the end of a rainbow'. Our crafts always allow for a variety of skills and art for the children to practise: fine motor skills like threading or scissor use; also, colouring-in and painting, glueing and sticking, baking and claywork (including learning how to get hands messy without distress). Imaginative exploration and sensory development is core to the selection of even the simplest of crafts.



As usual, we celebrated traditional and church festivals through crafts, baking and cards: Chinese New Year, Valentine's Day, Mothering Sunday, Easter, St George's Day, Fathers Day, Halloween/Bonfire Night, and Christmas; and as our new "school year" began in September 2025, we began a new theme for an entire year (running to July 2026): Nursery Rhymes & Tales.

Our choice of charity had rotated to a "national children's charity" in 2025, so we raised funds throughout the year for the National Deaf Children's Society: this included our Sponsored Slide in March, raffles at the end of each term and cake sales at our weekly sessions. In 2025 we raised **£358.45**.

Yet again the weather was against us for our 'summer' party – three years in a row – but we enjoyed a party in the Parish Hall with a bouncy castle and party games. Our Christmas Party was very well attended and after party food and games, Santa gave out 21 books to the children, kindly donated with funds from the Rotary Club of Barnard Castle. We also enjoyed decorating the Smuffies Christmas Tree with woolly Rudolfs and sleigh bells 😊

Smuffies meets every Tuesday during term-time from 1-2.45pm in St. Mary's Parish Hall, at just £1 per adult (children go free) and is open to anyone caring for babies and children under school age. **If you enjoy crafts and baking and chatting, why not join our Smuffies team for an occasional Tuesday - please be in touch with Kim – kirklandergirl@googlemail.com or 637018.**

Kim Harding + the Smuffies team