

# press release

**08 December 2005**

**The Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown and his wife Sarah host a Christmas Party on behalf of the children's educational charity SHINE.**

50 children from six of SHINE projects and their teachers have today been invited to a Christmas Party at No. 11 Downing Street.

Each year, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his wife host a party on behalf of a children's charity. This year, the chosen charity is SHINE, Support and Help IN Education, a charity that supports children from disadvantaged social backgrounds to get a better education. A number of SHINE children were also invited to design this year's Treasury Christmas card, with the winning design created by 9-year-old Charlotte Coleman of Hungerford Primary in Islington.

Children from six primary schools around London have been invited to meet Gordon and Sarah Brown, and to have an afternoon of fun and games in No. 11. The house has been decorated around a theme of Middle Eastern magic, shininess and sparkle. The children are treated to a puppet show, a magician and a storyteller, and can make their own kings' and queens' crowns and treasure chests. There is also a special appearance by the Three Kings who will be giving each of them their SHINE Christmas present.

**End**

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## Notes for editors:

### 1. About SHINE

SHINE funds and develops educational programmes to help disadvantaged children make the most of their time at school. These include specialist after school clubs, complementary classes on Saturdays and intensive literacy and numeracy support sessions. Some projects respond to the challenge of children with special educational needs, who require specific help to bring them up to speed. Some help underachievers, where a little more attention will enable them to do much better. And others stretch gifted children who want to see just how good they can really be. For a detailed list of the programmes we currently support, and for more information on SHINE, its Trustees, Patrons and staff, please see: [www.shinetrust.org.uk](http://www.shinetrust.org.uk)

### 2. Background data on deprivation

The impact of deprivation on educational development is first evident at 22 months of age. Over five million adults in England have poor literacy skills. They are more likely to be in low paid jobs, unemployed or dependent upon state benefits. They are also more likely to have poor housing and poor health. Over half of prisoners aged 15 to 17 have been excluded from school and 80% have no qualifications; 60% of all prisoners have difficulties reading.

### 3. Today's event

SHINE is grateful to all performers and suppliers who provided their services at a reduced rate or for free at today's event. We also thank No. 11 Downing Street for their generosity in providing the location and supporting our efforts in making this a special event for the SHINE children.