STELLA'S
LIFE
STORY
BOOK
This is the Story of Stella

I am 7 years old.
My birthday is on the 25\textsuperscript{th} March
My school is called
My teacher is called
My class is called
My best friends are called
I live with my family at
My favourite food is
My favourite colour is red
I have been on holiday to
My religion is
I go to church/mosque/temple
Stella lives with her mummy daddy and brother Jason. They have a pet cat called Catty.
my family

my dad

my mum

my brother

me
My Family’s Hand Prints
Here is a map of where I live.
Here is my house. I live near to lots of parks.

This is Stella's castle and she has put who she wants to in it.
Here are some pictures I have chosen with my mum that show how I feel sometimes.
When Stella feels angry she can draw an angry scribble, scrunch it up and throw it as far away as she can. Or she can make a picture out of it..... or count to 10 breathing very slowly out at each number like we practised!

This is an angry scribble that turned into a circle.
Here is a volcano that Stella has painted.

An alien lives in the garden. She is crying because she doesn't have a family. I am looking after her. Aliens don't get born. They come out of stars and planets.
A Baby needs ..... 

Cuddles

Toys

To be Clean

Nappies

Blankets

A cot

And to sleep.....

Here is a picture of Stella as a baby.
You were born on the 25th March 2005 at Chase Farm Hospital in Enfield. You weighed 6 pounds and 7 ounces and were quite ill for a few days. Your mummy called you Stella as it is Italian for star and she said you were her little star.

'I weighed the same as three strawberry ice creams!'
Here is a Family Tree

Granny Gloucester
Grandad
Auntie Frances
Auntie Sue
Uncle Steven
Mummy
Granny Cox
Simon
Uncle Dan
Daddy
Martin
Saul
Charlene
Heather
Jason
Stella lived with her birth family at the beginning of her life.

Stella has a tummy mummy called Heather and a birth Daddy called Martin.

Stella has a half brother called Jason who is Martin's son. She also has a half sister called Charlene and a half brother called Saul who are Heather's children.

Jason was born in July 2000 which means that he is 4 years older than Stella.

Charlene was born in January 1995 which means that she is 9 years older than Stella.

Saul was born in October 1996 which means that he is 8 years older than Stella.

Here are some photos of Stella's birth family.
Heather is from Scotland.

This is a map of Scotland.
When Stella was a baby Heather and Martin lived in the same flat with Stella. Their address was

Heather and Martin were together for five years and at first they got on very well. They saw each other a lot of the time and enjoyed talking, laughing and going for walks and playing cards. Heather said when she was happy she liked singing and dancing.

When Stella was a baby Heather and Martin took her to Wales where she met her half brother Jason and relatives on her father's side.

It was hard for Heather and Martin to look after Stella very well as they both liked to drink alcohol. Alcohol is fine to drink if you don't drink too much but both Heather and Martin did drink too much. Heather drank lager and cider.

When people need a drink [beer, lager, wine, vodka, gin, brandy, whisky, sherry] a lot of the time they can be called an alcoholic. Sometimes people get better from alcoholism and stop drinking but they need lots of help and it takes time to know they are really better.

People often become alcoholics because they are not very happy about things in their lives. Alcohol can at first make them feel happy and relaxed. Too much alcohol is not good for a person or for children around them and all the person can think about is having more to drink. It can make people loud, angry and clumsy. They can only care about what they want when they are drunk and not what anyone else thinks or says.

There are many different sorts of bottles and cans but they all contain alcohol.

There is nothing wrong with alcohol if people don't drink too much of it. Most grown ups enjoy a bit of alcohol now and then.

It is not healthy for people to drink too much and not safe for them or for the people they spend a lot of time with...
We do not know exactly how Martin and Heather were when they were drunk, but we do know that they had lots of rows and when Stella was one year old Martin decided that he could not live with Heather any more and left the home.

Heather did not have much money and was not paying for the flat that she was living in with Stella so she owed money to the owner. She did not have a cooker that worked and did not get it repaired so it must have been hard to have warm food.

Heather was not happy at this time and alcohol was not helping her. On one occasion she left Stella alone in the flat and babies should never be left alone as we all know. Sometimes Heather did not understand that for Stella, even as a baby, her drinking and behaviour would be a bit scary.

Because Heather was feeling sad and nervous about her life, she often did not go out in the daytime with Stella as she felt people were looking at her.

Social Workers got to hear about how life was going for Heather and they became very worried about Stella. Heather got herself involved in arguments with people in the street sometimes when she had been drinking and the police got to know about her. Social Workers found out she had a boyfriend who took lots of drugs and had fights with her. It is very wrong when grownups hit each other and most parents don't do this especially when a man hits a woman. They have not learnt to control their tempers and lots of times there is no one to tell them off and help them stop. Children have people to do this for them at any time but grownups don't.

Social Workers decided life would be much safer for Stella if she could stay with foster carers whilst Heather tried to get better. She also was told to leave her flat as she owed so much money for it.

Stella stayed with her relatives [great aunt and Grandmother Pauline] then moved to the Mitchells' who were foster carers on the when she was 16 months old. Karen and Arthur loved you very much.

Foster Carers are people who look after other people's children when Social Workers think they are not safe enough with their birth mummy's and daddy's.

Heather knew that she could not look after you very well at this time.

Karen and Arthur really enjoyed having such a little girl who was so pretty and funny living with them.

When Stella was two she always woke at the same time which was just before 6 o'clock and she stayed awake all day. Stella enjoyed a cup of tea without sugar and she always went to bed at 7pm in the evening. Stella slept well with a bottle of warm milk and sucked her thumb as she went off to sleep. This is something Heather said Stella always did when she lived with her too. Her Mummy and Daddy say she still does this even now!
This is their house at 48 Windfall Avenue in Barnet.

Here is Stella at Karen and Arthur's.

Stella had her second birthday with her foster carers, Karen and Arthur.

Heather and Martin still loved Stella very much and felt very sorry that they were not able to care for her themselves.

Whilst Stella lived with Karen and Arthur it was up to Social Workers to decide what should happen to Stella in the future and whether she needed to be adopted. Adoption is when children do not live with their birth families but become part of a new family.

Opal Smith was the name of Stella's Social Worker. Here she is...
Karen and Arthur said that Stella could be shy and quiet but when she was comfortable she could become very lively and active. They loved it when she played with her toy piano and sang to them.

Here are Karen and Arthur and a letter from them to Stella about how they enjoyed looking after her.

Stella remembers living with Arthur and Karen. She recalls that

'Cranky the parrot landed on Duggie the dog. Cranky said 'Whose a pretty boy?' to Stella and Stella said 'I'm a girl' Cranky flew on to Stella's shoulder and on to her finger whilst singing Arsenal songs! Duggie barked and barked.'

Karen and Arthur loved Stella very much and they had foster children called Rickie and Lucy living with them too. They said that everyone who met Stella loved her as they did and that Stella's personality was so infectious.

Stella remembers that

It was very sad when Stella had to leave. Stella said it was hard because she did not know then that she was going to be happy in her new family.

Stella says

'An alien lives in the garden. He is crying because he doesn't have a family. I am looking after him. Aliens don't get born. They come out of planets and stars.'

Stella had her second birth day with her foster carers, Karen and Arthur.

Whilst Stella lived with Karen and Arthur it was up to Social Workers to decide what should happen to Stella in the future and whether she needed to be adopted. Adoption is when children do not live with their birth families but become part of a new family.

The name of Stella's Social Worker was Chrystal Thime. Here she is...

Heather and Martin still loved Stella very much and felt very sorry that they were not able to care for her themselves.

Opal organised for Heather to visit Stella at a Contact Centre three mornings a week. Sometimes Heather would bring Saul and Charlene with her. It was often hard for Heather to get there to see you as she was still drinking too much alcohol.

Heather did not want to work with Social Workers at this time so it was difficult for them to know if she was better or not. They did need to make a decision quickly and could not wait for Heather as the seasons were passing by. By December when Stella was almost three, a judge decided that it was right that a new family was found for her.

A Social Worker called June Earl looked hard for a family that would be just right for Stella.
June was so pleased when she found the Dove family. The Dove family were delighted when they heard about Stella.

Stella came to live with her new mummy, new daddy and new big brother Simon and her new cat, Catty.

Stella moved to Windfall Avenue in February 2007. Stella was almost 3 years old. It was very hard for her to leave the people she cared about and her new family understood how angry and upset this made her.

Stella continues to see Arthur and Karen in the summer holidays and they care about her very much.

On the January 2008 when Stella was four years old she was adopted in a court.

Adoption

Adoption is the word to describe what happens when a court says that a child gets a different family from the one they were born into [their birth family].

On Adoption Day the whole family goes to court. A Judge said that you have become a full part of the family you live with and can have their name too. This change lasts forever and means you will live with them for the rest of your childhood and even when you are an adult if you all want to!

Judges who can be women or men usually wear wigs when they are in Court. Did your judge have a wig on? People believe that the wigs help the Judges seem wise and intelligent.

Here is a picture of Stella at the court with the Social Worker who found the right Mummy and Daddy for her on Adoption Day. Here is a picture of Stella with the Judge in court on Adoption Day!
Here is Stella's Adoption Certificate

Number:

IN THE NORTH LONDON FAMILY PROCEEDINGS COURT

THE ADOPTION AND CHILDREN ACT 2002

On the 15th January 2008

Stella Grainger

born on the 25th March 2005

was

ADOPTED BY

Sandra and Martin Grainger

[JUSTICE(S) OF THE PEACE]
Stella is born. Stella's Life in Seasons

Age 1
Stella went to the Mitchell's.

Age 2
Stella moved to her forever family.

Age 3

Age 4

Age 5

Age 6

Age 7

I have been with my family for more seasons than I have been anywhere else!
Stella has been part of her family for four years now. Here are a few pictures of her since then.

This is the day I learnt to cycle.

Here is our family Cat, Catty.

I can do Computer Art.
This is me in Year 1. I am in Year 3 now.

I took this photo.

This was my first big party when I was 5.
Stella spooky in Autumn

Stella melting in Winter with a friend!
Stella and her Family

When I grow up I want to live in the country and drive a Pink Convertible.

I like Drama and Art. When I grow up I want to be an actress and an artist.