



Sophia (centre) and her friend Alba aboard the Go North East Santa Bus.

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## Eight-year-old fundraiser wins visit from Santa Bus

Sophia Garrett from Rickleton Primary School in Washington has been announced as the winner of Go North East's 'letter to Santa competition'. Sophia's letter beat hundreds of others from school children around the region and won her school an exclusive visit from the Santa Bus.

The open-top bus decked out in Christmas lights has travelled around the region for the past five festive seasons, with families lining the streets to see Santa and his elves dancing on the top deck. This year, the bus operator asked children to write to Santa, explaining why their school deserved a very

special visit from Santa, his elves and the Santa Bus.

Eight-year-old Sophia's letter shared how hard she had worked to be kind this year. Sophia and her friends raised over £1,125 for Cancer Research UK running the Big Sunderland 3K, she's donated clothes to Barnado's, dressed as Pudsey for Children in Need and even shared sweets with her big brother!

Sophia said: "I've been trying really hard to be kind this year and I told Santa all about it in my letter. I was so excited that all of my class got to go on the bus to meet Santa and his elves!"

The Santa Bus visited Rickleton Primary School on 15 December, the heavy rain didn't dampen the children's spirits as they queued up to sit Santa Bus – a rare treat usually reserved for Go North East staff.

Ben Maxfield, Business Director at Go North East, says: "Thank so much to everyone who entered our Santa Bus competition. We received so many lovely letters, but Sophia's really stood out. We were really impressed by her fundraising efforts this year and well-written, rhyming letter.

"We've been overwhelmed by the response to our Santa Bus this year. More people than ever have come out to see Santa and his elves who are all volunteers, giving up their time to make sure no child misses out on the magic of missing Santa."

Go North East's Santa Bus is touring the region until 19 December 2025, find out where its heading on the [Go North East website](#).

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[Go North East website](#)

## Contacts



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