



HILL WEST  
*Primary*  
FOUR OAKS

# THE HILL WEST HERALD

[theherald@hillwest.bham.sch.uk](mailto:theherald@hillwest.bham.sch.uk)

ISSUE 1



SPRING TERM 2013

## Message from the Head Teacher

---

I have been fortunate enough to attend two great sporting events this year. The first was the Olympic three day eventing in Greenwich Park where team GB won a Silver Medal and the second was more recently; the 6 Nations Rugby decider in the Millennium Stadium between Wales and England. These experiences, outside of my life in school, inevitably enrich my leadership role within school and as such my mind has turned to the characteristics of great teams.



As we know team sports require a group of individuals to work collaboratively to achieve more together than they could individually. A great team player is able to involve their teammates in the play instead of trying to do everything themselves. A great team learns the importance of being selfless, making the critical pass as you approach the try line or ensuring a clear round for the team rather than a personal best time. The ability to get along with teammates is essential, recognising that each individual has unique talents and specialised skills that should be utilised to best effect. A great team player should be able to take responsibility for their actions instead of trying to assess blame elsewhere and they should be willing to help lead their teammates, developing their skill and expertise in the process. A great team player always gives their best effort because failing to do so would mean letting down the rest of the team. As such team sports require a group of individuals to work together for the greater good. Great teams have high energy. They tend to be enthusiastic people who give energy to one another. All of this of course is underpinned by a team vision and this is perhaps one of the most important characteristics. It is essential that teams stay focused on their long term goals and that these are aspirational so that set-backs, such as a loss against Ireland in the opening of the 6 Nations campaign, do not compromise spirit, belief or resilience. Resilience is an interesting concept. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape or the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties. Great teams learn from their set-backs, value the experience and evaluate their performance and this all contributes to their resilience.

We can, of course, apply these insights to our life of work. At Hill West we have a great team of practitioners who have developed a shared vision, who are happy to share the glory of success and the responsibility for set-backs, are resilient, have endless amounts of energy, are willing to help others develop into outstanding practitioners and, above all, are truly ambitious for Hill West and its pupils. Reflecting on the characteristics of successful teams makes us even more determined to be among and remain alongside the best schools in the country. We too want to represent our country.



## Learning Partnership Training Day

---

There was a positive start to the New Year when we joined our Partnership schools at The Arthur Terry School for a combined training day. Nearly 500 staff from across the six schools met to share skills in a series of seminars presented by staff from across the Partnership.

A number of staff from Hill West were asked to deliver a workshop. Mr George presented on pupil data; Mrs Munro delivered a workshop on Art in the Primary Classroom; Mrs Hull looked at a partnership entitlement-what should all the children and young people experience whilst at school; Mrs Leeson delivered a session on coaching colleagues and Mrs Page and Miss Patter delivered a workshop on writing in Key Stage One.

This was the first time that staff from Brookvale Primary, Mere Green Combined, Slade Primary, Stockland Green, Arthur Terry and Hill West had come together collectively.

It was an opportunity for staff to work together, share ideas, resources and expertise that will have an impact in the classroom immediately and make learning even more enjoyable and effective.

We were also able to congratulate Sir Christopher Stone, executive Head Teacher of the Learning Partnership, following his knighthood in the New year's Honours list. Sir Christopher was quick to dedicate his award to those colleagues who had worked or continued to work with him.



## Able Writer's Day

by Mrs Bakewell, School Librarian

---

On Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January, budding poets from Years 5 and 6 were treated to a day of rhyme from comedy performance poet Neal Zetter, as part of the Able Writers Day project.

Pupils from five schools around Birmingham met at Mere Green Primary as part of the Able Writers project, a scheme to help children reach their full potential in writing.

The fun filled day began with Neal performing some of his amazing poems, including The Invisible Woman, I'm a Chocoholic and My Dad Can't Rap, to the delight of the children. They were then set the challenge of writing their own performance poem around the theme of Superheroes or Super Villains.

Neal expertly guided the boys through their rhyming journey, from the basic principles of writing poetry to how to engage and even include an audience in performance of a poem. All the boys jumped in with both feet and really took on board Neal's advice and produced some amazing work!

At the end of the day the children were invited to perform and share their poems (much to their horror) and, with much persuading and Neal's inspiring words of encouragement, everyone performed to great applause.

The children thoroughly enjoyed their day and were inspired to express themselves creatively and perform some really fantastic poems. We have printed one of the fantastic poems written by Peri Haralambous and Bobby Singh in Year 5.



### The Day I Met The Hulk

The day I met the hulk,  
He turned from scientist to super hulk!  
He had a 6 pack,  
Also green skin.  
And on his face he wore  
A mean,  
Green  
Grin.

A mean,  
Green  
Grin

He's really strong,  
With bionic speed,  
Fists of fury  
Make the villains bleed.  
Villains bleed.

The ultimate Avenger is the mighty hulk.  
All the other Avengers better pout and sulk.  
'Cos today in the mirror,  
What did I see?  
The Hulk in the reflection  
Was really me ....



## School's out .....

by Miss Hyde, Class Teacher - Hedgehogs Class

---

I've always been into sport and have played hockey since the age of 13. I played for a club, represented Central Warwickshire district and got up to county level. I had a five year break during and just after university but since moving to Tamworth last year, I decided to start up hockey again. I joined Tamworth Hockey Club which have three ladies teams and four men's teams. This season, I am playing for the ladies 1<sup>st</sup> Team in the Midlands League, Division 2. After a rocky start, we've improved our form and are currently 4<sup>th</sup> in the league!

Playing at this level requires a lot of commitment; I have to train for 2 hours a week and play matches every Saturday. We have a coach who *really* puts us through our paces and gives us a lot of tactical guidance. We all rely on each other to do our job on the pitch and support each other to do so. I play up front most of the time and my role is to help us score!

One thing I've learnt this year is that you spend about 95% of the game without the ball, however my position during this time is crucial. I can help to make things easier for my team mates by creating options and moving defenders. It all requires a lot of thinking but it is rewarding when our efforts pay off and we win games! Of course it's not all about the winning and the bonus about team sports is that you've always got people around you!



## Year 5 working with Brookvale Primary School

by Miss Wilks, Class Teacher - Badgers Class

---

Our Year 5 staff have been benefitting from the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership by getting the opportunity to work alongside colleagues at Brookvale Primary School in Erdington.

So far our staff have made an informal visit to Brookvale and their staff to Hill West. We have then collaboratively planned a two week cross-curricular topic to discover more about both schools in the past, present and even the future. The children in each of our schools have been given the opportunity to reflect on similarities and differences between their respective schools and see how their own schools have evolved since they first opened. They have been thinking about how their school might further change in the future and will present their vision for a future Hill West and Brookvale to an audience.

The children will be encouraged to contact each other via letter, email and Skype throughout the topic and these links will continue to be developed and embedded throughout the year.

As well as this project being an opportunity for the children to work collaboratively it has also provided rich professional development opportunities for our staff as they have been able to watch each other teach and plan together to ensure work is challenging, engaging and well-moderated. This has involved ensuring that a Level 4B writer at Hill West is producing the same standard of writing as a Level 4B writer at Brookvale. These opportunities are really valued by the staff as the best learning often comes from opportunities to do so informally on-the-job.



## A Winter Wonderland

by Mrs Connop, School Office

---

The snow in January was a beautiful sight at Hill West but the disruption that it caused left school shut for two days. Mr Botterill, our BSS, battled in vain during the first day of snow and as we watched it fall from the school office window, it covered the cleared pathways as quickly as Mr Botterill could sweep and a decision was made to allow children to go home early for the weekend.

Dr Clarke was the only one who made it into school on the Monday after a weekend of snow and it was clear we needed to send for reinforcements. The PTFA offered support and rose to the challenge, arriving armed with shovels and goodwill to clear the driveway and paths around the site.

On the second day that school was closed Mrs Balla and myself walked to school dressed for an arctic expedition and watched, from the warmth of the office I hasten to add, as Mr Staples, parent governor cleared half the car park in return for coffee and biscuits.

Other parents came along to help during the week; Mrs Mutch and her little helpers came to dig out Dr Clarke's car which had become an unrecognisable shape in the snow. Mr Hume volunteered to help make the playground safe and ended up digging a parent out of the snow as well and Ms Kitteridge took care of gritting the icy playground.

At the end of the week, with school safely open to staff and pupils, we held a whole school snow man building competition which everyone enjoyed immensely.





# SNOW MAN BUILDING



# Teaching and Learning

## A Focus on Building Learning Power

by Mrs Leeson, Assistant Head Teacher

On 29th October all of the Hill West staff joined staff from other schools in the Cluster to receive training on Building Learning Power. BLP, as we call it, began with Professor Guy Claxton, who stated:

***“Building learning power is about helping young people to become better learners, both in school and out.***

*It is about creating a culture in classrooms - and in the school more widely - that systematically cultivates habits and attitudes that enable young people to face difficulty and uncertainty calmly, confidently and creatively.*

*Students who are more confident of their own learning ability learn faster and learn better. They concentrate more, think harder and find learning more enjoyable.*

*They do better in their tests and external examinations. And they are easier and more satisfying to teach.*

*Building Learning Power prepares youngsters better for an uncertain future. To-day's schools need to be educating not just for exam results but for lifelong learning. To thrive in the 21st century, it is not enough to leave school with a clutch of examination certificates. Pupils/students need to have learnt how to be tenacious and resourceful, imaginative and logical, self disciplined and self-aware, collaborative and inquisitive.”*

As a school we decided that Professor Guy Claxton's philosophy fitted well with our creative approach to Teaching and Learning. At Hill West we aim to equip children with the skills and confidence that they will need to be life long learners.

This term we adapted the individual learning profiles to accommodate a BLP target.

### Building Learning Power

My building learning power target is:-

**To be a resourceful learner and ask meaningful questions to take my learning forward**

The Learning Power I think I am good at . . .

I need to get better at . . .

School can help me by . . .



In all of our classrooms we have created BLP displays to reference throughout lessons.



5.2.12

L.O- To use addition and multiplication in problem solving



WILF

- I can **make links** with my work from yesterday
- I can make choices about how I am going to show my working out
- I can show **interdependence** by choosing whether to work alone or with a partner
- I can find different possibilities

BLP is now an integral part of our teaching and learning within school and can be evidenced in learning objectives and WILF (What I'm Looking For) for each lesson.

The key vocabulary of BLP was introduced to the children before Christmas so that we had a shared understanding of the four learning dispositions and of the learning power capacities. We also created our own characters to represent each of the dispositions.



# What does BLP look like in the classroom?



I am a resilient learner because I am absorbed in my learning.



We are reciprocal learners because we work collaboratively.



We are resourceful learners because we are imagining.



## Primary Evaluative Review (Week beginning 4th February)

Every year our school chooses to take part in a Primary Evaluative Review (our own mini Ofsted). This year the review team consisted of:

Helen Smith from Mere Green – Assistant Head Teacher with responsibility for Teaching and Learning shadowing :

Nichola Leeson-Assistant Head for Teaching and Learning, Beth Clarke-Head Teacher and Joy Hull-Assistant Head for Inclusion

Our findings, after observing lessons, looking at performance data and questioning key members of the leadership team, were:

- \* All staff had high expectations of pupils and where planning was seen, teachers had a clear idea of the pitch and expectations within that year group and they knew how to ensure the most able pupils made rapid gains across the lesson.
- \* There was a high level of engagement shown by all pupils because the activities were exciting and were clearly based on the children's interests. Cross curricular links were strong and there were many examples of how pupils were applying their Maths and Literacy skills across the curriculum effectively.
- \* The Pace of lessons ensured that all children made at least good progress through the lesson
- \* TAs were used exceptionally well as they were clearly focused with groups of learners and enabled further scaffolding and challenge.
- \* Adults were constantly aware of checking pupil's understanding and intervening where appropriate to re-shape tasks.
- \* Questioning by all adults was extremely effective and allowed all groups of learners to extend their thinking.

## Governor week (Week beginning 28th January)

Each term we invite Governors into our classrooms to partake in the lessons. This term their focus was Building Learning Power. The Governors were looking, as critical friends, at the children's understanding and use of key BLP vocabulary, the way BLP is integrated into the curriculum through lessons, Learning objectives and WILF criteria and the way BLP is displayed within the classrooms.

# Art with Mrs Munro

---

The pupils have explored a variety of art materials and techniques during the Spring Term and have created some fantastic pieces of work. Each year group had a different starting point for their project and have used sketchbooks to collect and develop their ideas. I'm sure you will be impressed with the artistic talent we have here at Hill West.

Here are some examples from each year group.

## Year 1

### Self-Portraits

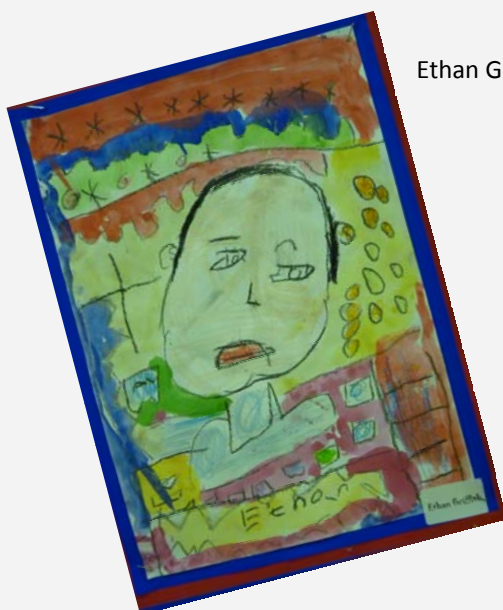
The children in Year 1 have drawn self-portraits using wax crayon, they then added watercolour paint over the top. This technique is called 'wax resist'. They are full of colour and character!



Isabelle Dawson



Ayla Crouch



Ethan Griffith



Ocean Farley

## Year 2

### Working with Clay

The children in Year 2 have chosen their favourite Season and have created a scene out of clay to depict it. They used a variety of techniques to make marks in the clay and add shape to their design. The final stage was adding colour with paint.



Annabel Garbutt



Tani Campbell



Jenna Staples



Mack Carroll



Matthew Jones

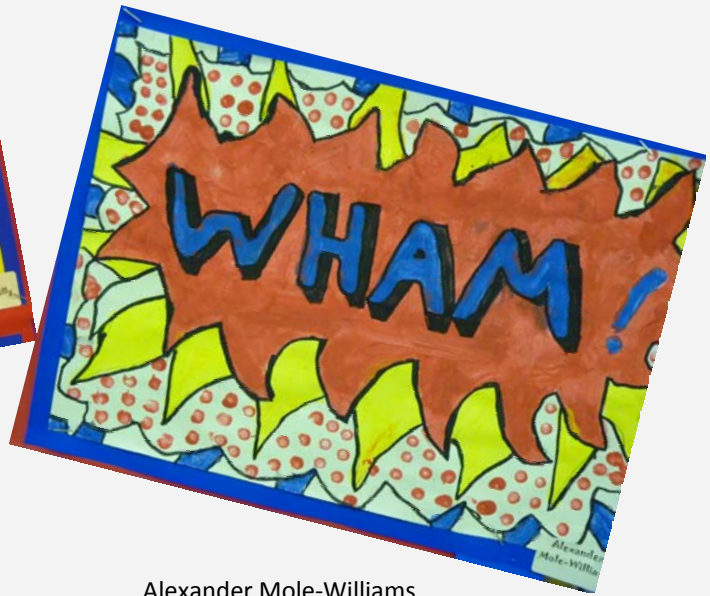
## Year 3

### POP Art

The children in Year 3 have explored the work of Roy Lichtenstein, who was a leading figure in the Pop Art Movement. They used paint and black pens to recreate his bright, 'cartoon strip' style pieces.



Jamie Reilly



Alexander Mole-Williams

James Neate



Kiara Blick

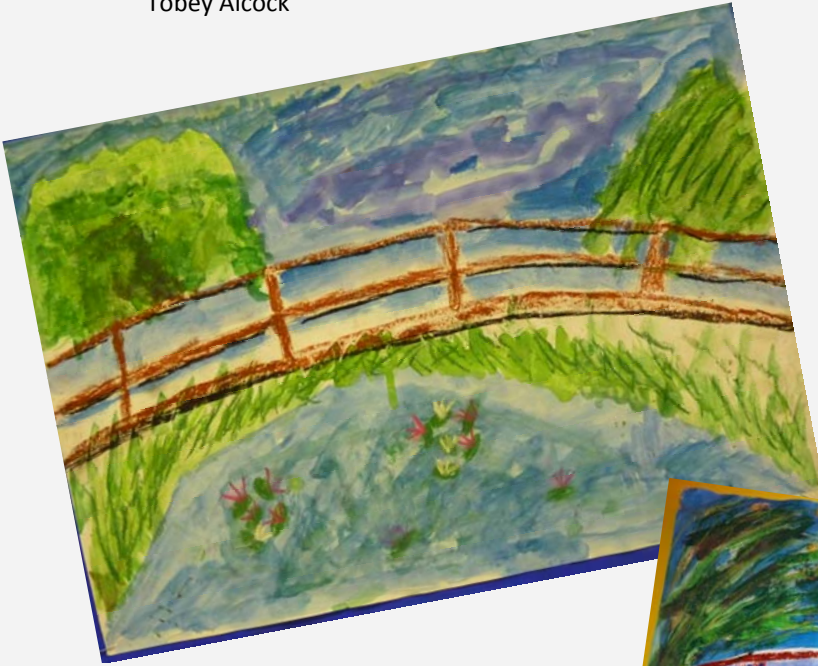


## Year 4

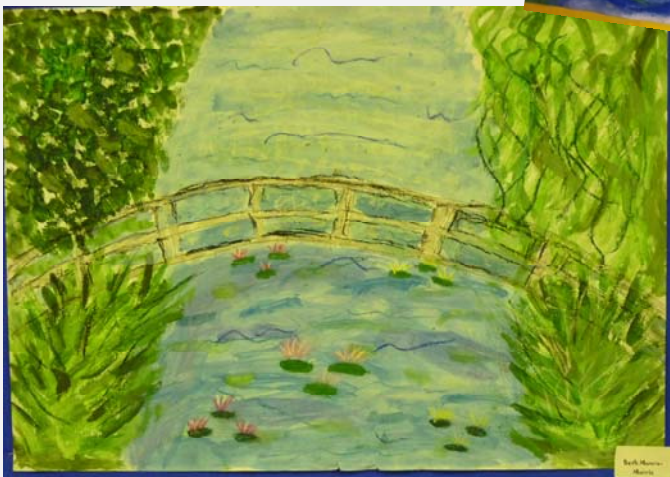
### The Work of Monet

Year 4 looked closely at a painting by Claude Monet called 'The Water Lily Pond'. They used a variety of media (watercolours, oil pastel and chalk pastel) to develop their painting and drawing skills.

Tobey Alcock



Kahrel Reddin



Beth Munro-Morris

## Year 5

### Architecture in Sutton Coldfield

Year 5 researched the range of architecture in Sutton Coldfield, now and in the past. They selected a favourite building and produced a drawing of it. They then used a variety of materials (e.g. card, mod-roc, polystyrene) to add structure to some of the key features. The final versions were then painted.



Rebecca Woodfield



Amy Beck

## Year 6

### String Printing

Year 6 pupils used the work of William Morris as a starting point for their designs. They made a printing block from card and string and produced bright, colourful printed designs.



This is a selection of work by individual pupils.

Can you find yours?

## Cooking in Year 2

by Miss Patter, Year 2 Teaching Assistant

---

Friday afternoon in Year 2 is spent having fun cooking. The children cook a variety of foods. These include curry, stir fry, bread, cakes and biscuits.

During the lesson the children are encouraged to talk about healthy eating and we use some basic recipes to ensure that they incorporate more fruit and vegetables into their diet. As well as having fun the children learn new skills and gain confidence. We aim to link the cooking to our topic in class.



Here is the recipe if you want to try them at home:

### You will need

130g of soft butter  
130g of caster sugar  
2 eggs  
130g of self raising flour  
4-tbl spoons of milk

Set the oven at 180 degrees

Combine all the ingredients.

Spoon the mixture into cake cases.

Bake for 15 minutes.

Leave to cool and then decorate.

Don't forget to lick the bowl clean!



## Year 6 Poetry

---

Year 6 produced some nautically themed poetry this term. Here, Sophie and Jodie have produced poems that not only reflect the power of the sea but their words also evoke strong emotions of fear and exhilaration.

### The Wave by Sophie Elsoueidi

My heart was pounding,  
Breaking out of my chest,  
The board ate the sea,  
As I approached,  
My belly was doing flip-flops,  
I couldn't breathe,  
The sea pleaded for me to come,  
Riding upon it's biggest wave,  
Faster, faster, faster,  
The board was going faster,  
Higher, higher, higher,  
The board was dragging me up the wave.  
This was it, No giving up now,  
Here we go, Up the wave,  
My biggest nightmare,  
Yet my biggest dream,  
I pulled myself up the wave,  
I was dreaming,  
At the top I held my breath,  
This was amazing, brilliant, spectacular,  
The sound was horrendous,  
When I crashed down the wave,  
Slower, slower, slower,  
Lower, lower, lower,  
I had made it.

### Wonderful Wave by Jodie Lock

My heart was pounding like a drum,  
The waves were crashing against the  
rocks,  
The sea was inviting me in.  
How could I resist?  
How could I say no?  
It is impossible to stay out!  
Here we go!  
I was as scared as hell!  
What if I die?  
No! I won't so here we go!  
Here comes the wave!  
Crash! Splash! Bash!  
Up we go onto the wave!  
Relief!  
It's all over.



## School's out.....

Beth Munro-Morris, Moles Class

---

Beth, who joined Hill West recently after relocating from Wales, takes her gymnastic training seriously. Her mother, Carolyn Munro-Morris has told us that Beth started going to a weekly gymnastics class at 3 years of age. At 5 she was invited to train in a squad for 6 hours a week. Her training then gradually increased over the years to present day where at 9 years of age she now trains 20 hours a week.

Beth has competed in many friendly competitions from the age of 6 where she won several local competitions. Beth was then selected to do the elite route of competitive gymnastics at the age of 8. She went on that year to win the Cardiff and South East Wales county championships. Later in the year she competed at the Welsh National Finals for her age group and came fourth.

Having very recently moved to Sutton Coldfield, Beth now trains at Tamworth Olympic Gymnastics club. She has been training for the West Midlands Regional finals which took place earlier this month. Beth came fourth and has been selected to represent the West Midlands at the National Finals in April. A marvelous achievement!

Even though Beth trains long hours and works very hard in the gym, she enjoys the social aspect of gymnastics as much as the training. She said the best bit about gymnastics was going away with the team, staying in a hotel with your friends and going swimming together after the competition! The worst bit about gymnastics is being stretched! Beth has never been naturally flexible so having to stretch regularly can be very uncomfortable!

Beth's future aspirations are short term at the moment. She wants to continue along the elite path for now and keep scoring well enough to make National Finals. She would like to represent Wales one day at international level and anything else would be a bonus!

What an inspiration young Beth is and we wish her the best of luck at the National Finals.



## Working with Aston Villa

By Miss Rowe, Class Teacher - Hares Class

---

As part of our sports provision within curriculum time we continue to engage with specialist coaches from our local area. Throughout the Autumn and Spring terms Year 5 have been working with the coaches from Aston Villa Football Club each Friday morning.

Community Coach Jon Baylis leads the sessions with Hares and Badgers, and ensures that the children are taught both football skills and about how to keep fit. Throughout each term Jon guides the children in developing their skills and knowledge of the game.

The children have so far looked at ball control: the parts of their feet which they can use to control the ball, ways to warm up and different muscles that they use, using your hands as a goalie, working as part of a team and passing and moving into spaces.

The children take part in the sessions with a great deal of enthusiasm! Especially when Jon makes up warm up games about going to the zoo or driving a car up the motorway! Each game becomes more challenging, e.g. with the children facing more members of opposition or more obstacles to travel around.

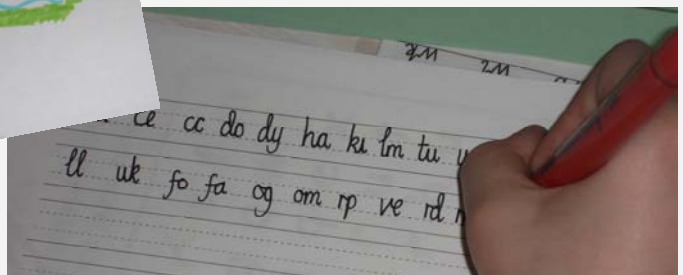
This term Simone Farina, who played a key role in helping to stop a match-fixing attempt in Italy last year, has joined Aston Villa as a community coach and is working alongside Jon. He wows the children each week with his control and skills and in return they are trying to help him develop his English!

When he first came to Hill West one of the children commented... "Who's this French guy?" The children have since learnt that Simone played football in Italy at a high level.

In fact, the former Roma defender was in the news when he was approached and offered 200,000 Euros to help influence a Coppa Italia match between his club Gubbio and Cesena in November 2011. Simone refused and reported the incident to Italian police and his evidence helped lead to the arrest of 17 people the following month.

Following this the FIFA president Sepp Blatter named 30-year-old Farina as a FIFA ambassador for fair play. An excellent role model for the children of Hill West I'm sure you will agree.





## Inspire Workshop—Year 5, Badgers Class

---

On Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February, Year 5 children took part in their Inspire Workshop based on their 'SpLasH' work in class. 'SpLasH' stands for Spelling, Language and some Handwriting, which continues to be a high focus in all classes.

Everyone worked their way around the various stations, which included handwriting, past tense snap and homophone games on the laptops. By far the most popular stations were Mrs Anderson's 'Trigraph Treasure Hunt' and the iPad word games. Children and adults alike enjoyed testing their phonic knowledge to crack the code and earn the golden coins in the treasure chest. Children were also eager to share the iPads with their adults, who found it useful to see firsthand how new technology can help support their learning in class.

Children also came up with mnemonic posters to help remember tricky words in their Literacy. For example to help remember because, we can use the mnemonic Big Elephants Can Always Understand Small Elephants. Some very inventive posters were created!

Thank you to all family members who took the time to come to support and work alongside the children; it was fantastic to have such a good turnout and hopefully you learnt something too!



## World Book Day

by Mrs Bakewell, School Librarian

On Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March, pupils and teachers at Hill West Primary celebrated World Book Day 2013 in style, with a pyjama party celebrating the importance of reading and enjoying bedtime stories.

All the children came in their PJs and brought along their favourite bedtime story to share with their class mates and teachers. This was followed by a breakfast feast for lunch!

Reading bedtime stories to children is a wonderful experience for parents and is an invaluable support for children's reading and encouraging a love of books. It is one of the first experiences children have with books and it's a great way of fostering a love of literature, which has significant impact on children's reading and writing.

Pupils in KS2 were lucky enough to join the Biggest Book Show in Earth and watched a live author event, via webcam. The event, organised for World Book Day invited children from thousands of schools across the country to see an amazing line-up of NINE fantastic authors and illustrators including Tony Robinson, Lauren Child, Shirley Hughes, Francesca Simon, Anthony Horowitz, Rachel Bright, Liz Pichon, Cathy Cassidy and Guy-Parker-Rees - and hosted by Tony Robinson himself!



## The Easter Holidays

---

It can be quite a problem to know what to do to keep the children occupied during the school holidays and although it seems as if we have only just returned to school after half term the Easter holidays are upon us.

We asked some of the children what they had enjoyed during the holidays:

We played football.

My friend had a sleep over!

My mum took me swimming!!

A fab bike ride in the park!

I saw the sea. It was very cold... Brrr-

A yummy picnic with my friends.

Some children went further afield with visits to Drayton Manor or to the Snow Dome. Other children were very excited to have visited grandparents or family friends.

It can be difficult if parents have to work during the school holidays and it can be expensive and difficult to find somewhere for children to go .

Mere Green Library and Community centre have a range of activities going on in School time and at holiday times – pop in and make some enquiries or go on their website.

The Arthur Terry school runs some great holiday activities.

Many parents want their children to keep their reading and writing ‘ticking over’ during holidays. Keeping a diary is a good way to keep up writing skills. Sending emails or letters to friends and relatives, all practice writing skills. Making a scrap book about a visit or holiday and of course reading anything from story books to recipes all help.

Let us know if you have any good and inexpensive ideas for keeping the children occupied in the holidays.

## The Comenius Project

by Miss Wilks, Class Teacher - Badgers

---

We welcomed our international visitors to school on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March. They comprised 2 teachers from Sweden, 4 teachers from Poland, 9 teachers from Italy and 12 Italian children.

Hill West have been fortunate enough to secure €20,000 funding from the British Council to take part in a 2-year Comenius project with other European Schools called 'Save the Blue Sky'. We will be working collaboratively alongside Primary Schools in in Palermo, Sicily, Poznan, Poland and one in Sandviken, Sweden.

The Comenius Programme is named after Jan Amos Comenius and is aimed at schools, colleges and local authorities across Europe. It has two main objectives; the first being to develop knowledge and understanding among young people and staff of the diversity of European cultures and languages, and the value of this diversity and secondly to help young people to acquire basic life skills and competences for their personal development, for future employment and for active European citizenship. The project will focus mainly on environmental issues which affect us all, regardless of where we live, with the aim of encouraging our children to take action today for the good of tomorrow.

In November 2012, Miss Wilks and Miss Marsh visited Palermo, Sicily to meet the other participants and finalise details for the first year of the project. Upon their return, children in Year 5 and 6 created Christmas Cards to send to our partner schools in Italy and Sweden and they each received a card back from a new friend.

Throughout the week, our guests were treated to the 'Best of British' including a trip Lichfield and a walking tour of Birmingham with shopping at the Bull Ring, a traditional Birmingham Balti, a visit to Warwick Castle, sampling traditional British fayre at Mad O'Rourke's Pie Factory and devouring a delicious carvery! They also spent time in school, acquainting themselves with the similarities and differences in the school systems and talking to staff and pupils.

The week culminated in a spectacular farewell assembly where the Italian pupils performed the traditional Sicilian dance, the 'Tarantella', for us, to rapturous applause. The guests were presented with a goodie bag each full of traditional British treats, such as Cadbury's chocolate bars, Earl Grey teabags, marmalade and HP sauce. The Head Teachers from each school were also presented with a huge union jack to display back at school.

The atmosphere around school was incredible all week; there was a real buzz amongst both staff and children. Not only did it give us an opportunity to showcase the 'Best of British' but it also gave our children the chance to meet teachers and children from across Europe and our staff to discuss pedagogical approaches.

Next stop is a staff visit to Poznan in Poland during May to evaluate the first year of the project and plan the second year. We are excited at the possibility, in the future, of taking some pupils to our international partner schools in Sweden, Poland or Italy.





## Twitter

by Mr Hall, IT Manager

follow us on  
twitter



@hillwestprimary

Hill West have been using Twitter to promote our successes for some time and as we deliver this magazine to you we have 262 followers. We think we could improve on this and would like to share our ideas and thoughts with you. In this section we deliver some of the basics of Twitter, some facts and highlight how we think it is a useful tool for our school community. Twitter users have a username or address that always begins with the @ symbol. The Hill West address is [@hillwestprimary](https://twitter.com/hillwestprimary).

Twitter began as a social media tool in 2006. It has rapidly grown in popularity and today has over 288,000,000 active users. Originally designed as a tool to communicate and connect with peers large corporations and businesses realised its potential as a tool for marketing and advertising. With the enhancements of technology such as smart phones Twitter has become a way of life.

Celebrities, business leaders, large corporate institutions and news agencies use Twitter to get instant messages and reports out to followers and fans alike. TV programmes commonly show hashtags at the beginning of the show to get twitter users talking and sharing their views in the hope that it will draw more attention and increase viewing figures. News reporters will have twitter accounts so that the public can inform them of current developments with news items and add to the delivery of news events to the world. Its use is growing and growing fast.

The use of Twitter in education has dramatically increased over the past 2 years and is a very powerful tool. Educators share good practice, ideas and links to useful tools to aid teaching, they discuss topics, curriculum delivery, technology in the classroom and government legislation finding it increasingly useful. Many educators use the hashtag #educhat to discuss education matters with fellow professionals, meaning it is quick and easy to join conversations. At no previous point in time has a tool been so effective with teachers sharing ideas with one another.

Schools have recently seen the benefit of Twitter as a communication tool for parents and their local communities and at the same time publicly promoting the good practice that is delivered every day and celebrating the success of their pupils.

Twitter is instant, it allows our followers to instantly receive updates or progress. It could be a school trip, with a tweet of a photo of our children at the Black Country Museum. It could be a tweet to say "Arrived at Bockelton all safe and sound" or "we are running late our coach is stuck in traffic, ETA 16:30" All messages that you as parents may find useful, Twitter limits messages to 140 characters so they are sure to be brief and precise.



## Facts

- Twitter is now the fastest growing social platform.
- Membership numbers increased 40% between Q2 and Q4 2012.
- There are now 485 million account holders.
- There are 288 million active users.
- It took 3 years for 1 billion tweets. Now that many are sent every 3 days.
- 750 tweets are sent every second



## Common Terminology

### Hashtags

The # symbol, called a hashtag, is used to mark keywords or topics in a Tweet. It allows twitter users to categorise and search for tweets on a specific subject when the # is used with a word.

- People use the hashtag symbol # before a relevant keyword or phrase (no spaces) in their Tweet to categorize them and help them show more easily in Twitter Searches.
- Clicking on a hashtagged word in any message shows you all other Tweets marked with that keyword.
- Hashtags can occur anywhere in the Tweet – at the beginning, middle, or end.
- Hashtagged words that become very popular are often referred to as “Trending”.
- In our example we used #comenius to tag our tweet when we were at Warwick Castle with our foreign visitors. Anyone searching for #comenius would see our tweet in there results even if they were not following us.

### Time Line

Used to describe the list of tweets you can see that have been posted by the people you follow.

### Trending

A term used when many users discuss a subject or topic by using hashtags.

### Bio

A short personal description of up to 160 characters to define who you are on Twitter.

### DM

Direct Message. Twitter allows people who connect with each other to send private messages to each other, similar to email.

### FF

#FF stands for "Follow Friday." Twitter users often suggest who others should follow on Fridays by tweeting with the hashtag #FF.

### Follow

To follow someone on Twitter is to subscribe to their Tweets or updates on the site. You need to follow people continually have there tweets available in your timeline.

### Mention

Mentioning another user in your Tweet by including the @ sign followed directly by their username is called a "mention". You too can be mentioned by other users if they include your username.

### RT, Retweet or Retweeted

The process of forwarding tweets or copying tweets of others to all of your followers.

## The Four Oaks Sports Partnership Dance Festival

By Miss Rowe, Class Teacher - Hares Class

---

Following the success of the gymnastics event at Four Oaks Primary School earlier in the term we received an invite to a "Dance Sharing" morning at Arthur Terry.

Year Five were enjoying a dance unit based around the Haka in their curriculum PE sessions so we asked the children if some of them would like to represent us at the event.

On Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> February we took thirty one Year Five children to Arthur Terry - each child who expressed an interest was given the opportunity.

The morning was fantastic and a real success.

The children enjoyed using Arthur Terry's beautiful, modern dance hall and were led by a dance teacher from the school. They began by showing their "hippest" moves to a song from Hairspray - this included some pretty "cool" hair combing, shoe tying and general "getting ready" moves and then learning an exciting routine with the children from the other schools. There was also an opportunity for the children to add their own "freestyle" moves into the song at the end!

Laughing and joking after the dance section of the morning, the children enjoyed some drinks provided by Arthur Terry and prepared for their big moment!

Four Oaks Primary and Mere Green Combined also shared dances, with Year Three from Four Oaks engaging us with a Little Mix number and Mere Green showing an energetic dance and providing a moving finale.

Shy at first... Year Five stepped up. The children had choreographed their own routines based on the All Black rugby team's Haka and also organised their own costumes. Some even wore scary face paint to add to the effect!

...and they didn't disappoint! Wow! One of the teachers from Four Oaks thanked Hill West for scaring him! In time, energetic, intimidating and exciting – each group gave their best.

As we proudly walked back to Hill West one of the children said, "It was great performing, but it was also really cool watching the other school's performances."

A wonderful morning had by all. Well done Year Five!



## Mathletics

By Miss Hyde, Class Teacher - Hedgehogs Class

---

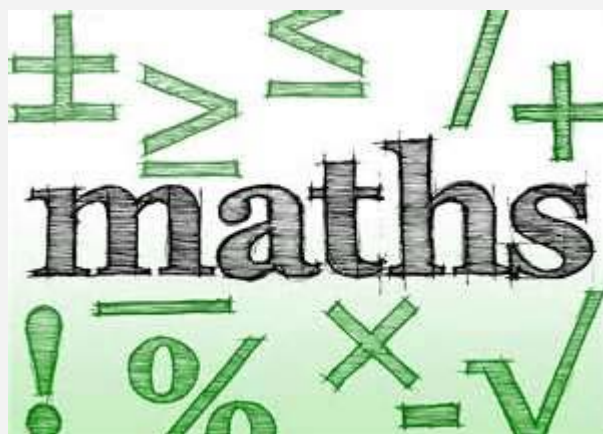
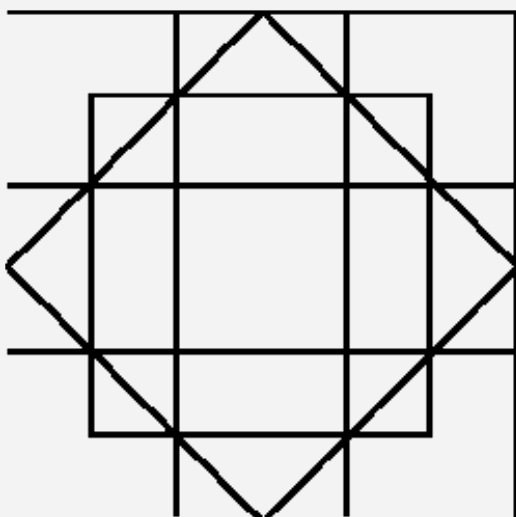
At Hill West, we aim to develop a positive attitude towards maths and one where all children feel that they can succeed as confident mathematicians. As part of this, we have invested in an online learning platform called 'Mathletics' which can be accessed through the internet or by installing the app.

All children in Years 1 to 6 have received a log-in card which allows to them to access the site at home and in school. Already, the program is proving popular with many children playing on the 'live mathletics' feature. This feature allows children to develop their mental maths skills and develop their rapid recall in a fun and exciting way.

We have no doubt that Mathletics will continue to be a success and look forward to your support with the children's involvement with it.

Can you solve this puzzle?

The diagram below shows a pattern made up of squares. How many squares can be found in the pattern?



For the answer please see page 33

## Comic Relief Red Nose Day

---

On Friday 15th March we all came dressed in red with the theme 'Do something funny for money'. The children really entered into the spirit of the day and we raised over £300 for the charity.

The day also coincided with the Year 6 Takeover Day, which saw pupils shadow members of staff for the day, carrying out their duties and learning about the world of work.

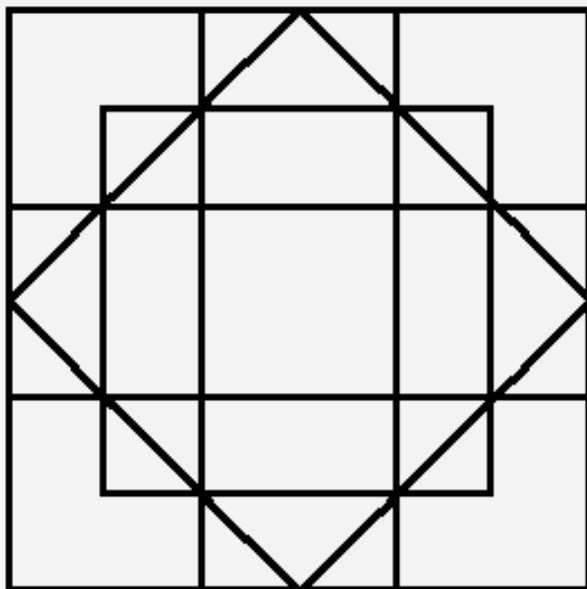
A great time was had by all.





Here is the answer for our Mathematics puzzle .

There are 24 squares of various sizes, as this breakdown diagram illustrates:



**One outside square**

**Four squares comprising a diagonal consisting of the centre grid square and one centre corner square**

**Nine grid squares**

**Four centre corner squares**

**One square rhombus**

**Five squares each comprising four "grid squares"**

**(One at each corner plus one in the middle)**



## **A Magical Morning of Stories**

by Mrs Bakewell, School Librarian

---

On Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March Key Stage 2 pupils were treated to some magical storytelling from popular children's author Ciaran Murtagh.

At the beginning of the morning Ciaran wowed the children with extracts from his first book *Dinopants* and his latest series of *Genie* books, which had the children rolling in the aisles. He also talked about his experiences as an author, actor and comedian, particularly his involvement with CBBC shows *The Slammer*, *Professor Bumm's Story Machine* and *The Legend of Dick and Dom*.

Ciaran then set about inspiring the children to create and write stories. He showed the children how ideas can be created by finding random words in a dictionary and how, from two words a story can grow and develop. His technique was then put to the test and, ably assisted by the children, he created an hilarious story called *Fat Owl*.

With sides aching from laughter, children were then given the chance to buy one of the three books in his *Genie* series; *Genie in Training*, *Genie in Trouble* and *Genie in a Trap*, which Ciaran kindly signed.

At Hill West our aim is to foster a love of books and encourage lifelong reading. Authors are always such an inspiration to our pupils and it's a joy to see how the children respond to their visits.

## Parent Consultation Feedback

---

It is much better when the work is in one room and the teacher chat is in another - more private.

Fantastic as always. Very happy with all the teacher's efforts.

More evening appointments

I know exactly where my child is at the moment and where he needs to get to.

The teacher has really helped my child.

Well organised, given detailed feedback and good advice on how to supplement learning at home.

## Pupil Questionnaire Feedback

---

I like how the teachers encourage me to work harder and the classes are fun

I like how friendly our school is.

I like the chickens and the teachers.

I wouldn't like to change anything about our school

I like knowing I am safe at school.

We should use more outdoor areas for lessons.