



# THE HILL WEST HERALD

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ISSUE 4



## The last trip to Bockleton!

SPRING TERM 2014

## Message from the Head Teacher

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Educationalists across the globe now engage in continuing dialogue about education reform. None can afford to ignore the mounting evidence of what works and what doesn't. The **Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)** is a worldwide study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) of 15-year-old school pupils' performance in mathematics, science, and reading, in 65 countries. The fifth set of results revealed some interesting outcomes this year:

- ◆ The UK was ranked 26th in maths, 23rd in reading and 18th in science.
- ◆ The dominance of Pacific Asian countries has strengthened further, with Shanghai in the lead and Singapore and Hong Kong close behind.
- ◆ In Europe, Poland's rise and Germany's steady progress since the first Pisa report are evidence of applying lessons from the assessment over a sustained period.
- ◆ The UK remains good rather than great, in spite of the different reform strategies being pursued among the four countries. Within the UK, Scotland is marginally ahead of England. Both are significantly ahead of Northern Ireland and Wales.

The results reinforce other clear underlying messages suggests Michael Barber (Chief Education Adviser at Pearson, December, 2013) "First, talent is a myth. A strong cultural commitment to the belief that effort will be rewarded - as seen in Pacific Asia - makes a big difference". Those countries that believe some are born smart or bright while others aren't, and reinforces that through the education system, will never be among the top performers Barber suggests. Secondly, we need to focus on teaching and learning. Education leaders need to get inside the classroom and focus on the daily experience of teaching and learning. Barber (2013) suggests that the UK must do the following:

- ◆ Provide autonomy and accountability to schools. They need to go together; not one or the other but both.
- ◆ Invest in teachers. Recruiting great people to a well-paid profession and ensuring that they continually improve is vital. Crucially, systems need to make sure that the best teachers teach the most challenging students and the best head teachers lead the most challenging schools.
- ◆ Put every child be on the agenda. It is possible and desirable for systems to simultaneously improve their top performers and their low performers.
- ◆ Preschool works. Across the OECD, nations that invested in preschool performed significantly better than their peers.
- ◆ Persist. Several reform strategies work, but none will succeed without sustained pursuit over several years.

In essence, these lessons apply to everybody in education, not just to school or system leaders. The greatest challenge for education leaders is to have the courage to act on the evidence and improve the system.

## Learning Partnership News



It was with real delight that we heard earlier this year that our Executive Head Teacher, Sir Christopher Stone was to receive further recognition for his outstanding services to education by being selected to receive a Honorary Doctorate from Birmingham City University. The University honour individuals who have a demonstrable track record of exceptional service to the City of Birmingham or its locality and who have made outstanding contributions to public or professional life nationally or internationally.

Sir Stone, received his Honorary Doctorate from Birmingham City University in a ceremony at Symphony Hall on Friday March 7th. Recognised as an outstanding leader – regionally, nationally and internationally – the honour came after he was awarded a Knighthood in the Queen's New Year's Honour List last year, endorsing his service to education.

As you know, Sir Stone has played a significant role in education across the region, having acted as chair of the School Improvement Board in Birmingham from 2010-12, which was charged with leading the strategic programme for improving vulnerable schools across the city. He has worked as a leadership coach and mentor for several authorities and now actively enjoys that role within and beyond the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership. Between 2005 and 2007 he was a member of the first Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) cohort to undertake the Executive Head Teachers' Programme.

In 2007, he was invited to Downing Street to meet the then-Prime Minister Tony Blair in relation to his work with extended schools and continues today to engage with those shaping and directing educational policy at the highest level.

In 2010 he undertook a visit for the British Council to train education leaders in Vietnam and in 2011 he visited Australia to investigate the innovative University Schools programme in both Melbourne and Adelaide.

Speaking before the ceremony, Sir Christopher said: "I'm humbled by this award and deeply thankful to everyone who has helped and supported me along the way. Education has truly set me free". This philosophy is at the heart of everything we do within the learning partnership. We are committed to providing an education for our students that enables, celebrates, congratulates, challenges and stretches. We want all of our students to follow their dreams irrespective of their starting points or the barriers they may face along the way.

Sir Christopher Stone visits Hill West every week. Some weeks he can be seen sitting on the floor with our pupils in Reception, while other weeks he may be meeting with members of the Senior Leadership Team. His role here, as we see it, is to inspire, advise, guide, support, challenge and enhance what we already do. Much of his work involves leadership succession planning; identifying potential school leaders of the future and working with them to ensure they have the necessary skills and abilities to be highly ambitious and successful. In doing so we are increasing our leadership capacity and are able to work with schools across the Learning Partnership and beyond.



## Easter Assembly

by Mr Sheard - Class Teacher, Moles



This year we celebrated Easter with an assembly prepared by the children in Moles and Squirrels. Easter is a special time of year in school when we celebrate new beginnings through the Christian story of the resurrection of Christ. All too often Easter can become about chocolate eggs and bunnies but Year 4 were determined to remind us of the true meaning of Easter.

They told us of how Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey on Palm Sunday, they explained the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot and relived the last supper. Jesus, played by Darren and Nia, wore a crown of thorns and was made to carry his heavy cross to Calvary hill. The children had learned their parts with confidence and precision and relayed sombre events with maturity. The assembly ended with Mary discovering the empty tomb and Jesus appearing to her.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our Christian families a very a happy Easter. We know this is a time shared with family and friends when we all get the opportunity to forget our busy working lives for a day or two and enjoy the company of loved ones.

We hope you all get at least get one chocolate egg!

## Easter Bonnet Parade

by Miss McNally - Class Teacher, Wrens

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The Reception children could not wait to show off their home-made Easter bonnets. Leading up to the event there was lots of excited discussion within Robins and Wrens about how the bonnets were being made. The children chatted excitedly about baby chicks, fresh flowers, ribbon, mini - eggs, cream eggs and even Angry Birds! Myself and the rest of the Early Years team were intrigued and could not wait to see the final creation!

The day of the parade arrived. Both classes were so eager to show off their bonnets, and no wonder! The bonnets were fantastic! So much time and effort had been spent to make them as fabulous as possible. They were a true reflection of the children's individual creativity.

With big smiles and waving hands the children proudly paraded around the assembly hall for their family and friends to see. What a wonderful way to start our Easter celebrations!

On behalf of all of the Reception team, we would like to thank the children and their parents again, for taking the time and effort to make such super bonnets!



## Singing Playgrounds

by Mrs Lampitt, Teaching Assistant, KS2



Singing playground children are a group of youngsters that have been put together to play games that involve songs. The singing playground children have been on two training days out of school to learn the songs and practice how to deliver them in the playground. All fifteen of the children have a special badge which tells all the other children on the playground that they are song leaders, and will show the children how to play the games.

Singing playground happens once a week at present on a Monday and the song leaders are really enjoying it. Song leader Team Captain Harriet said "I love singing and it is so nice to see more and more children enjoying the games we are playing with them. Their favourite is Jump Jim Joe. Since joining in, all the children have grown with confidence."

Hill West Primary is one of the hundreds of schools which take part in this programme run by a company called Ex-Cathedra. We are planning for the summer term that the singing playground children will team up with other local schools for the children to share ideas and play the singing playground games together.



The singing playground children enjoying a practice session at one of our team building days at the trinity centre in Sutton Coldfield.

## School's out .....

by Mr Coveney, IT Technician

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Myself and rugby, what can I say, from the first time I took to the pitch I was hooked!

It all started four years ago after a conversation with a friend, he asked me to go and play five a side football and afterwards there would be some touch rugby. I went to the session and was asked to join in with pre-season training, I did two months of training and was asked to play for the fourth team as a tight head prop. Four years later I now play 1st and 2nd team rugby at Aston Old Edwardians. I was kept at the club because of the passion for the game by my team mates, the camaraderie whilst on the pitch and the pace and action of the game. There is nothing else quite like it.

As of October last year I qualified as a Level 2 coach which helped me as I now coach junior rugby on a Thursday and Sunday to pass on my experience and help bring the lads skills up. We have gone from a team which wasn't winning to a team which has won their last three games.

I am always happy to tell people what I get up to on the weekend and I am often seen on a Monday morning hobbling around after a particularly hard game on a Saturday afternoon!



## Sports Roundup

By Miss Rowe - Class Teacher, Hares

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Back in January we took part in a basketball festival at Arthur Terry. The children received some coaching from Sports Leaders and then played against several local schools. Our "Red" team managed to get to the final, where they were unfortunately beaten by one of the Coppice teams.

Thirty two children from Y5 attended a gymnastics sharing event at Four Oaks Primary School on 31<sup>st</sup> of January, and despite the cold, wet and rainy weather outside the children shone! We have some amazing talent in Year 5 and the other schools were impressed with the routines that our children performed and choreographed themselves.

On 5<sup>th</sup> March we took forty KS2 children to an athletics competition at Arthur Terry. The children had been practising their indoor athletics skills and running technique in PE lessons and were very eager to show what they had learnt...

The Years 5 & 6 team came 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> in every event, and the Years 3 & 4 team also did exceptionally well. Overall the Years 5 & 6 team came first, beating Four Oaks, Wylde Green and Mere Green and the Years 3 & 4 team came joint top! A great night of athletics and a huge thanks to the many, many parents who came to support.

March was also a very successful month for our school football team. On 6<sup>th</sup> March they played against Wylde Green Primary and won 3-1, then on 18<sup>th</sup> March we played against Hollyfield and also won 3-1. Our final league match was against Highclare, and Kheeva's hat trick secured us a brilliant 5-1 win. We await the results of other fixtures to see if we have managed to secure the "league winners" title this season, well done team!

The Year 4 football competition at Arthur Terry was equally successful. Both teams won their group matches and went through to two finals. Our A team beat Four Oaks B 1-0, while our B team drew against the Four Oaks A team. A fantastic night, again with a lot of parental support – thank you! The boys and girls responded to coaching advice and put in 100% effort. A well deserved victory.

As this goes to print two Years 5 & 6 netball teams will be playing in a tournament at Arthur Terry and two Year 6 football teams will be taking part in a tournament at Coles Lane ground. We wish them the best of luck.



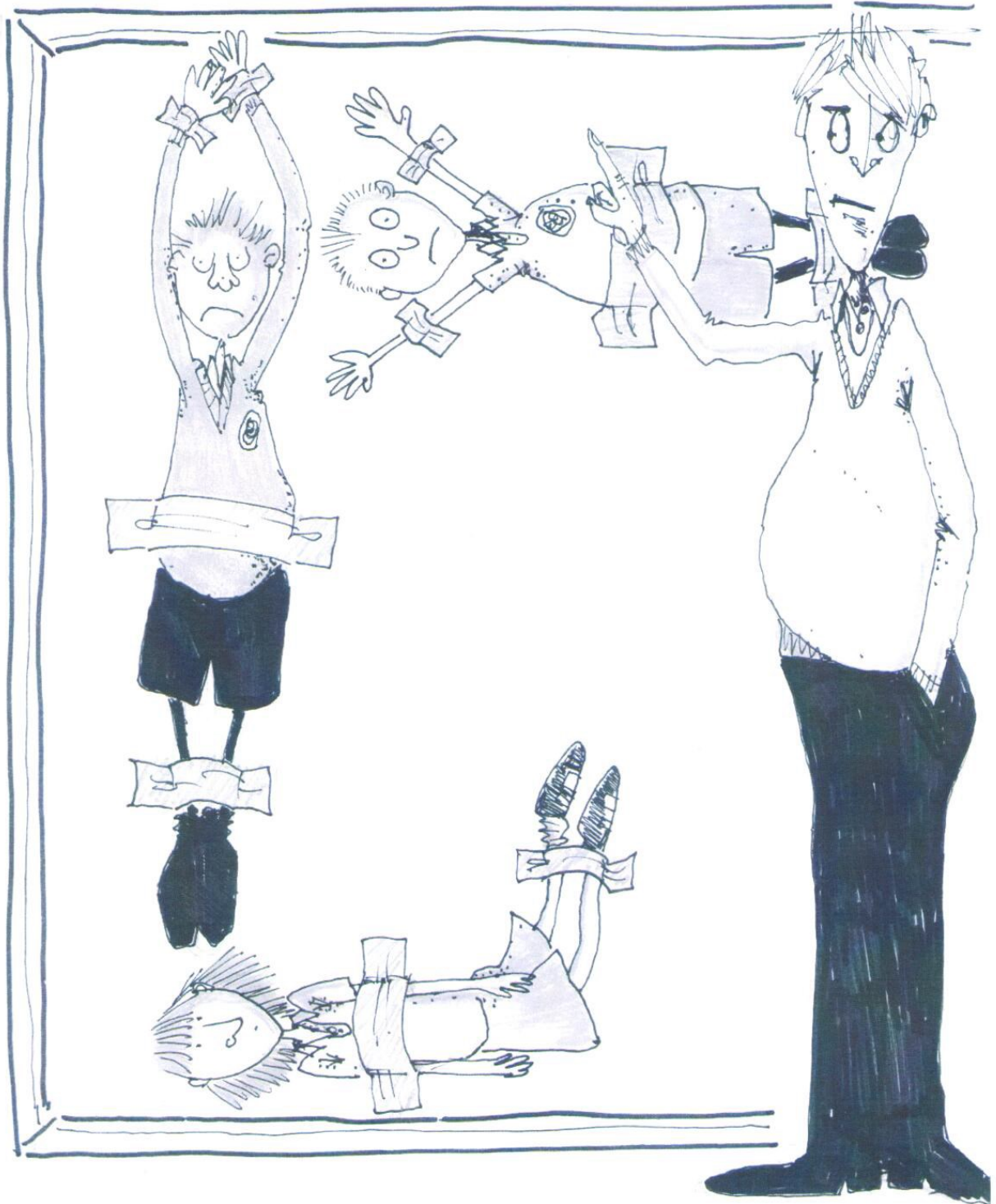


**Our fantastic sports boys and girls and their supporters.**



# A day in the life of a Teaching Assistant

By Mr Fennell, Teaching Assistant - Wrens Class



A caricature drawn by Mr fennell from first hand experience in Phonics.

## Can you code?

By Miss Stone - Class Teacher, Robins and ICT

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The new 2014 primary curriculum has had quite a shake up, especially in the area known as ICT. The first notable change is that it is now to be called Computing. This is brilliant! We are now able to further enhance our pupils readiness for the working world of our modern era.

Computing still involves the teaching and learning of word processing but now has a high focus on coding also known as programming. All tasks in our everyday life involves us following a set of instructions, much like computers do. These can be called algorithms. Imagine the algorithm (instructions) for making a cup of tea... did you choose to put the kettle on first? Or get the cup out of the cupboard? But first wouldn't you need an algorithm for how to switch on the kettle? Or do you need to check there is water in the kettle first? The possibilities go on and on and can get quite confusing as many individual steps in an algorithm would require its own algorithm!

At the core of the new computing curriculum is the notion that children develop their computational thinking. That they can write and break algorithms down or debug (fix) algorithms that aren't functioning properly. This is progressively taught throughout both KS1 and KS2. Children will begin by programming toys or characters to follow a certain path or to reach a destination avoiding obstacles. This will then develop to children inventing, designing and testing their own games and apps. Admittedly it is a little scary learning all the new vocab but I am confident that our children will become our teachers! I highly recommend taking a look at the following interactive website and you can have a go. If you are feeling brave have a look at the higher levels.

<http://learn.code.org/>

Click on the K-8 intro to computer science course

The following link explains some of the new vocab.

<http://code-it.co.uk/csvocab.html>



## Inspiring children to become authors

By Mrs Lampitt - Teaching Assistant, KS2

We were really pleased to meet the authors Kate Pointon from Tamworth, who writes about the Peapod family, in KS1 and Debi Evans, who co-wrote The Secret Society of Dragon Protectors, in KS2 recently.

The children were very excited to welcome the Peapod Family to the world. Kate told how she had based one of the characters in the Peapod family on her own Grandfather. As well as writing the series, Kate also illustrated the books.

Debi gave the children a fabulous insight into her series of fantasy adventure books. "Dragons are everywhere" she told us, "you just have to look hard to see them". She gave a fabulous presentation and explained where to look in order to find traces of dragons and how dragons need protecting. The children were totally mesmerised and some were even given special Dragonore, with their purchases of the books. Mrs Lampitt and Mrs Bakewell also brought some of these books to go in our library for children to enjoy.

Pupils from all year groups were able to ask Kate and Debi questions, which helped them to understand what makes a good story, how to go about writing a book and gain some advice on improving their own creative writing. One child wanted to know what their favourite childhood books had been when they were growing up! Both authors went on to sign the children's copies of their books, a real treat.

After both presentations some of the children joined the authors for tea and cake in our library which both authors thoroughly enjoyed. The children asked the authors lots of questions about writing books and what kind of books they liked to read in their spare time.



## Cool Cooking at Arthur Terry

By Mrs Anderson, Teaching Assistant - Year 6



Year six have again been privileged enough to be invited to have some Food Technology lessons at Arthur Terry, in their well equipped kitchen style classrooms.

I thought it would be nice to share one of the recipes that the children have learnt with you.

### Irish Soda Bread

#### Ingredients

6oz self-raising flour

1\2 tsp salt

1\2 tsp bicarbonate of soda

1\2 pint butter milk

#### Method

Pre-heat oven gas mark 6\400f\200c

Tip all the flours, salt and bicarbonate of soda into a large bowl and stir with a knife.

Make a well in the centre and pour in the buttermilk. Mix together well.

Turn out onto a floured board and knead into shape (this should be a nice rounded dome).

Place on a baking tray. Cut a cross into the top about 3\4 into the dough.

Glazed with milk add oats for a bit of crunch!

Cook for around 30 minutes.

Serve with soup, just jam or whatever takes your fancy!



## Year 6 Round-up

by Mr George - Class Teacher, Foxes

Year 6 have had a busy old time this term revising for their forthcoming exams - they are set into master classes to prepare for those all-important SATs - however they have managed to shoehorn in a few exciting events over the past few months as well.

The stand-out event perhaps was the Year group visit to France ... frogs legs and snails (yes, really) were on the menu and the boys and girls had to try out their language skills in a restaurant and supermarket. The Somme museum was no doubt a harrowing yet memorable experience.

Charity events have also played a large part - the 'enterprise scheme' turned Year 6 into 'The Apprentice' style entrepreneurs willing to sell their grannies for a quick profit (not really) and raise money for self-selected good causes through targeted jumble sales, car washing and sponsored cycling (to name but a few). Moreover, the sponsored skipping event 'Jump rope for heart' was successful in tugging at the heart strings (sic) of parents and family and over £400 is winging its way to the British Heart Foundation.

After finding out their secondary school destinations the children have not been letting the grass grow under their feet! The careers fair (organised by Mrs Hardeman) brought together a wide variety of potential employers - from police officer to architect - who were prepared to be grilled within an inch of their lives by a knowledge hungry bunch of willing souls otherwise known as Year 6.

In the near future of course, the Year 7 form teachers will visit Hill West with GCSE grades in mind and will be supplied with teacher assessments and background information to help with academic and friendship groupings and of course a decision will be made on the leavers' performance. In the running are 'The Wizard of Oz', 'Wicked', 'Madagascar' and 'The Little Shop of Horrors' amongst others, but we are hoping to enlist the help of *the Highbury Little Theatre* who are being contacted (via Mrs White and Mr Hamilton's networking) for a potential script and costumes - watch this space!



## Hill West PTFA

By Miss Wilks, PTFA School Liason

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“What does PTFA stand for?” A question I am often asked!

Our *Parents, Teachers and Friends Association* really are some of the best friends we have here at Hill West . We are immensely privileged to have such a committed, hardworking and passionate group of people working tirelessly for the good of our school.

Before being asked to be the PTFA liaison back in September I will admit that I had no idea how much goes on behind the scenes; planning events, setting up sub-committees, monthly meetings, minute taking, stock taking, recruiting helpers, balancing the books, advertising...the list could go on! The PTFA have welcomed me warmly into the fold and have been a fantastic group of people to get to know and work alongside.

This year our committee officers consist of our Chairperson Sarah; Year 1 parent, our Vice-chair Sam; Reception and Year 2 parent, our Secretary Jacqui; Year 6 parent and our Treasurer Dhiran; Year 1 parent. Many other committed parents attend meetings regularly, bringing along fresh ideas and enthusiasm.

So far this year they have organised two successful discos, a Christmas party afternoon, the amazing Christmas Fayre, a fabulous Quiz Night and a great Ladies Pamper Evening. Forthcoming events include the ever popular Hill West Fun Run and the eagerly awaited Summer Fayre. They have also made a significant contribution to our Reception Canopy, which is due to be built over the Easter Holidays. A busy year so far!

The next PTFA meeting will be held on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April at 7:30pm at the Butlers Arms. If you are interested in attending feel free to simply turn up or speak to KS1 office for contact details of the committee.

Dhiran Patel



Sarah Batchelor



Jacqui Whitehouse



Sam Dawson



## Health Week

By Mrs Thomas - Teaching Assistant, Wrens

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NO ME GUSTA! ME GUSTA MUCHO!

Like the food or dislike it, everyone enjoyed trying it, when Don Diego came to Hill West.

Don Diego's is a local tapas restaurant in Sutton Coldfield. Owner Emma, volunteered to come into our school with some samples of traditional Spanish cuisine for Years 2 and 3 to taste as part of our citizenship and health week. The children enjoyed learning about Spanish food, culture and even some of the lingo.

The first dish that the children had the opportunity to try was 'tortilla'. The 12 egg dish was also baked with onion and potato. Several pupils were a little wary about trying it because of the onion but a lot were pleasantly surprised. One of the boys from Owls said, "I thought I wasn't going to like it but it was Mmmm and scrumptious!" Emma served up some generous portions and there were mixed reviews. When it came to the vote around half shouted, "Me gusta mucho!" Which means 'I like it a lot' whilst others, slightly less enthusiastically said, "No me gusta" with scrunched up faces.

Now it was time to try the 'Tarta de Santiago'. This was the one they were all looking forward to as it is a sweet cake. Translated it means 'the cake of St James'. Every year in Northern Spain, worshippers of St James have a procession in honour of him. The almond cake has the cross of St James sprinkled on the top with icing sugar. Most of the children loved the cake and one lucky girl, Amber, grinned as she told me that her friend Hayley, didn't like it so she was able to have two pieces! "Que rico!" was the over all vote for the Tarta de Santiago. That was an overwhelming DELICIOUS!

Our thanks go to Don Diego's for a wonderful afternoon. Gracias Don Diego!



## The Stone Age is coming!

by Miss Shirley - Class Teacher, Swifts & Humanities

As some of you will be aware, there are big changes to our curriculum from September 2014. These are exciting changes which include new topics throughout the school, while still keeping some of our old favourites. One of the biggest changes for the non-core side of the curriculum is within History; children will be learning about the Stone Age, the Ancient Greeks, Christopher Columbus the Roman Empire and the Ancient Civilisations, to name but a few. These are exciting times with lots of new things to learn.

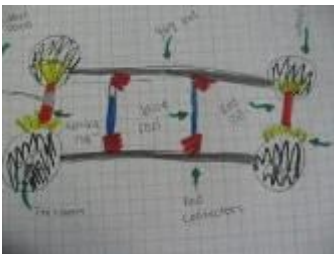


You will have noticed, and no-doubt heard from your children that we are avid iPad users here at Hill West. ICT is now being replaced with 'Computing' and will include some sophisticated new skills such as using logical reasoning to explain how some simple algorithms work and to also detect and correct errors in algorithms. We will also, as always, have a high focus on internet safety.



In Geography, children will be studying local, national and international locations and will build their skills to fully understand and explore topics. In Key Stage 1, children will be learning about capital cities and continents as well as identifying weather patterns and hot and cold climates. In Key Stage 2 children will be given the opportunity to study a region of the UK as well as learning about climate, rivers, mountains and earthquakes and much, much more.

Art and Design will ensure children learn practical skills such as cooking savoury dishes to promote a healthy lifestyle. They will also learn to research and to develop products which are fit for purpose. Children will also develop their technical knowledge to create and improve designs.



As always, these non-core subjects will be taught through our creative curriculum to ensure we make links through our learning.

## Year 6 trip to France

By Miss Wilks - Modern Foreign Language (MFL) Teacher

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Friday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2014 was a day of many firsts. It was the first day that Miss Hyde saw 5.00am in the morning... that Mrs Bakewell beat Dr Clarke to school... but most importantly of all, the first day that Hill West took pupils abroad!

Forty six Year 6 pupils and 5 members of staff were lucky enough to spend a long weekend in the small town of Rue in Northern France. We left school bright and early at 6.00am on Friday morning, full of excitement and anticipation. We travelled in style on our double decker coach down to the Port of Dover to board the ferry. Whilst on board some of us managed to find some French hairdressing students and had a makeover! Others made a beeline for the arcade and some preferred to shop for presents for friends and family. Once we arrived in Calais we made for Rue; arriving at our home for the weekend, Le Château du Broutel, at around 4.00pm.

We spent Friday evening settling into our rooms, enjoying a delicious dinner and competing in a scavenger hunt.

Saturday morning started like each morning at the Château; with delicious croissants and pain au chocolats. Miam miam! We then headed off on a tour of the Château grounds; finding out about the rich and varied history of the building. We found out that it was taken over by the Nazis during WWII and were even able to find evidence of them being there. We also heard about the fortunes and misfortunes of the family who owned the Château after the War. Then it was on to Rue town and a visit to the Saturday market. We had the opportunity to order *un chocolat chaud* in the local café and then some time to browse the market and surrounding shops. (The pâtisserie being the most popular venue!) After a lunch back at the Château we headed off to the beach for the afternoon. Huge sand dunes and a carousel ride made for a fun afternoon...even at the end of January!

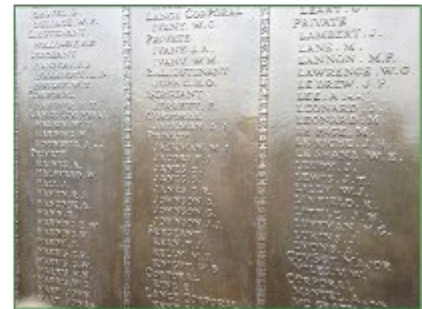
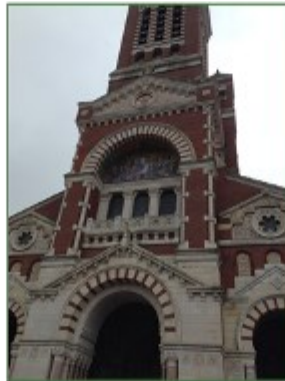
Sunday morning we were up bright and early for an interesting, historical day. We firstly headed to the Somme Museum in Albert, where we got the opportunity to see real relics and recreated scenes from WWI, including a trench that we could walk through complete with sound effects. We then spent a rather rainy afternoon visiting some of the many monuments and memorials to fallen soldiers from WWI. It was humbling to see first-hand the sacrifices made by so many men 100 years ago.



We had the opportunity to walk through real trenches from battle and to pay our respects to Canadian, French and British soldiers. After a humbling day we headed back to the Château for our final evening by taking part in an inter-dorm quiz.

Monday morning announced itself with a heavy hailstorm, which woke most of us up! We headed off to breakfast and then departed to visit a vast French supermarket to buy our lunch for the journey home. It was quite an experience!

We couldn't quite believe all that we crammed in to such a short time; it was a fantastic experience for us all and gave us a real-life context in which to use our French skills. Since we have returned to school, the children have been creating their own French towns and using the vocabulary they learnt whilst there to help them write descriptions. I must say they are fantastic!



## Calling all Scientists!

By Miss Baker, Class Teacher - Kingfishers and Science Co-Ordinator

# Science Superstars

# FIZZ POP SCIENCE

On Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January, Cosmic Craig paid a visit to the school to show all of the children how fun and exciting Science can be. He demonstrated practical, hands on experiments that brought Science to life. We learnt about friction and Cosmic Craig had lots of keen children from KS1 and KS2 to help him. Mr Hughes and Miss Stone even got involved!

The club is now up and running and the children involved have had lots of fun exploring a variety of science topics including bacteria and digestion. Keep an eye on Twitter to see what we get up to!

<http://www.fizzpopscience.co.uk/index.php> visit the website to find more information about Fizz Pop science and the club they will be running in school during the Spring term.

We loved making snot! We added mucus, blood cells, and bacteria!

I learnt new long words about bacteria.

I liked that I could take my snot home and show my mum!

We had a really good time with Cosmic Craig.



## Bockleton 2014

by Mrs Marnell, Class Teacher, Badgers

Did you see the Tweets? You are probably all aware that Year 5 challenged themselves to participate in a five day residential visit at Bockleton Hall Study Centre, from Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March to Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2014. The focus of the visit was to develop independence, resilience and collaboration.

All the children definitely exceeded these three foci and demonstrated extraordinary encouragement and support to one another, particularly when it came to getting muddy in fields and soaking each other when canoeing!

Hill West's pupils were given the opportunities to take part in many outdoor pursuits including: climbing a Powerfan telegraph pole and courageously stepping off the top, orienteering, problem solving, night walks, geo caching, low ropes, climbing, zip wire, toasting marshmallows on a night campfire, environmental art, dam building and various team games. It was wonderful to watch their confidence blossom as they rose to ever more challenging experiences. Ask them what their highlight was or take a look at their thought bubbles of the trip.

Surprisingly, Birmingham City Council has decided to close Bockleton and many other Outdoor Learning Centres. Upon finding out about this, the children led the learning and decided that they wanted to try and halt proceedings. In coming weeks they will be writing persuasive letters to prevent the cessation of Birmingham City Council's Outdoor Learning Provision. We wish them luck with their endeavour.



Being with friends was the best thing ever.

Dam building was mud-tastic!

I was very scared but I did it.



We worked as a massive team on the low ropes.

## Purple Pinkie Day

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On February 14th everyone came dressed in pink or purple in support of Purple Pinkie Day 2014. Purple Pinkie is a campaign by Rotary International to raise money for End Polio Now – one of the world's biggest-ever immunisation programmes.

Polio is a crippling and potentially deadly infectious disease caused by a virus that spreads from person to person invading the brain and spinal cord and causing paralysis. Because polio has no cure, vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and the only way to stop the disease from spreading. The spread of polio has never stopped in Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan. Poliovirus has been reintroduced and continues to spread in Chad and Horn of Africa after the spread of the virus was previously stopped.

The significance of purple pinkie refers to the dye which is applied to the fingers of children in India, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan when they have been given the polio vaccine against the disease which can damage the nervous system and cause paralysis.

Around 20 Sutton primary schools took part in the awareness day, dressed in shades of pink and purple, in return for a small donation. For every 20p donated, one child can be vaccinated against the disease.

Here at Hill West we raised a fantastic £290.00!



That's 1450 children who won't have to suffer the debilitating effects of this preventable illness.



## Careers Fair at Hill West

By Mrs Hardeman - Teaching Assistant



I enjoyed hearing about architects and how they make models and drawings.

Kirsty

I found the 3D printer really interesting

Lilly

I enjoyed talking to the Police and how they were inspired to join.

Grace F

On Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February pupils in Year 5 and 6 spent the morning attending a Careers Fair in school. The Career Fair was arranged to introduce our pupils to the world of work, giving them a taste of the varied career options available, showing them the many different roles available. However, the Careers Fair was also arranged to show our pupils the link between their learning now and their future as adults. Companies were invited to Hill West to come and talk to our pupils about roles, responsibilities and opportunities within their respective companies. Year 3 and 4 were invited to drop in informally at break time if they wished to speak with any group attending.

Companies represented offered a wide range of career prospects therefore with something to interest every pupil. Attending were West Midlands Police, West Midlands Fire Service, Birmingham Metro College, Sainsburys, Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Lloyds Bank, Jaguar Landrover, Mploy (Youth Training company) and Seymour Harris Architecture.

The pupils asked some very interesting questions and employers were very impressed with the range of questions, articulation and interest shown by each and every pupil. In fact some employers attending informed us they too were taking things away from the morning and had thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to work with our pupils.

Without exception every pupil attending found the morning interesting, informative, fun and more importantly gave them an insight into the future world of work. Each of them took something away with them that had inspired them.

A big thank you, of course, went to all the companies attending and to our pupils who, once again, made us very proud!



**Weird Places  
to Read  
For World Book  
Day 2014**



## World Book Day

By Mrs Bakewell, School Librarian

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On Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March pupils at Hill West joined millions of children around the world to celebrate World Book Day 2014.

World Book Day is the largest celebration of its kind and to mark its 17<sup>th</sup> year Hill West decided to set their pupils a very strange challenge. We asked the children to take photos of themselves reading in the weirdest places they could think of and boy did they rise to the challenge!

The children were so creative! We had children reading upside down, in a washing machine, on top of a post box, rock climbing and in the bucket of a digger! Even the teachers joined in the fun.

The festivities didn't stop there. On the day children dressed up as well as being treated to an exciting day filled with fun reading activities including the World Book Day 'Biggest Show on Earth'. The live event saw TV duo Dick and Dom joined by famous authors and illustrators (including Terry Deay, James Patterson, Sarah Lean, Emily Gravett and Jill Murphy) on a quest to discover what it takes to write and illustrate brilliant stories.

Reading is the foundation of children's learning and at Hill West we aim to encourage them to explore the pleasures of books and create lifelong readers.



Come rain or come shine.....



An **ENORMOUS** thank you to the PTFA who have donated over £10,000 in support of the project to expand the use of the Reception outdoor courtyard.

This photo represents how the area will look once work has been completed next term.

Watch this space for the grand unveiling!



## British Heart Foundation Jump Off

By Mrs Thomas, Teaching Assistant, Robins



Pupils and staff at Hill West were practising frantically to prepare to take part in a British Heart Foundation Jump Off.

Since its launch in 1987, over 25,000 schools have registered to take part in the Jump Rope For Heart initiative. This popular event raises money to not only support the vital work of the nation's heart charity, but also the participating schools, as they get to keep 20% of the money raised as well as a skipping kit (containing resources worth over £100).

On Thursday 20th March, 120 pupils, from Years 2 and 6 put on their trainers to take part in this fun event. The children have been learning about the importance of exercise and keeping their hearts healthy whilst practising new skipping techniques. Fortunately, we beat the predicted windy and rainy weather and, though a little blustery, a fantastic time was had by all in some sunshine!

Not only did the children participate in obstacle and relay races, but they also had a go at Double Dutch skipping (with varying degrees of success!) but lots and lots of laughs along the way especially when Mr Hamilton attempted it!

Well done, to all the staff who also took part in the event and tried some of the different techniques. This certainly added to the fun as far as the children were concerned. Mrs Anderson, we all hope your thumb has recovered after your dramatic fall!

Huge thanks to the children who raised a grand total of £522.00. And to their friends and families who sponsored them. Special thanks go to Isabelle Dawson from Year 2 who managed to raise over £50. And to reward her immense efforts the BHF will be sending her a digital skipping rope so that she can keep up the good work.

Thanks to everyone for such a fantastic event.

## And finally.....

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We are sadly saying goodbye to three members of staff at the end of this term; Mrs McEvilly, Mr Jeffries and Mrs Bakewell.

We are sure you will join us in wishing them all the best with their future endeavours.

We also say a temporary goodbye to Mrs George who is expecting the birth of her third child and begins her maternity leave this week.



### **Mrs McEvilly - Class Teacher, Squirrels**

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It is with sorrow that I am leaving Hill West in April 2013. I have only been at Hill West for a short period of time but I have thoroughly enjoyed my time working at Hill West. My class, Squirrels, have continually shown inspiration in all areas of learning and have even challenged me with some of their questions in their quest and thirst for knowledge. Keep this up!

I have enjoyed meeting all the parents in Squirrels and would like to thank you all for the support that you provide for your children on a daily basis. I will be working at Springfield House School to broaden my teaching experience. I wish all the staff, governors, and pupils and parents a wonderful future and I hope that all of your dreams and aspirations come true!



## Mr Jeffries - Music Teacher

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If you haven't already heard, I will be leaving Hill West in due course to pursue other musical projects. I have been teaching music on Tuesdays for the past three years and will miss coming in!

Most of my work these days is freelance, a large proportion of which is choral work, developing networks of choirs for all ages - a real passion of mine. I also undertake school projects/training, music courses, workshops and some private teaching too. A recent project is in connection with the NHS and 'Active Arts', running singing therapy sessions, which is fascinating work.

Future projects include the setting up of two more choirs, one in Solihull (an extension of the Sutton Social Singers, which now has an intake of over 100 across two days) and one called 'B Natural' - an ambitious choral group designed for adults who can read music and wish to tackle challenging repertoire. The aim is to develop this to the very highest of standards.

I will still be working with the successful Four Oaks Cluster Choir, Training Choir, Sutton Coldfield Youth Voices and The Accidentals, as well as the Cluster Orchestra. I will, no doubt, continue to see some of the Hill West Pupils in the future if they are involved in any of these groups. I shall also be continuing some trumpet and piano tuition at Hill West over the summer term, so you can't get rid of me that easily!

If you'd like to keep in contact, or find out more about what I do and what I offer, please visit my website: [www.musicbyarrangement.org](http://www.musicbyarrangement.org) and feel free to follow me on twitter: @RichMJeffries

I'd like to express thanks to Hill West school for giving me the opportunity to develop music over the last few years!



## Mrs Bakewell - School Librarian and Teaching Assistant

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Where do I even begin to describe the last 13 years at Hill West Primary School?

Well I guess a good place to start is with some thank you's . Firstly I would like to thank Beth for her continual support and unwavering belief in me over the years. To all the fantastic staff who have scaffolded me, mentored me and have become (and will continue to be) some of the closest friends I have ever had. To the Governing Body who have welcomed the newbie with open arms! To all the great parents, who have been so generous with their kind words and have allowed me to be a part of their children's lives. Last and most importantly all the amazing children I have met over the years. Their enthusiasm, humour and spirit have continually inspired me; you have made me cry with laughter and also cry with pride.

Hill West Primary School feels like a member of my family and I have watched it grow alongside my own children; from a small infant school to a primary who is not only a leading school but a leader of schools. It is a very special place with very special people in it and I am very proud of its achievements.

Leaving Hill West has been one of the hardest decisions of my life and, although I will still be a part of its future as a Governor, not being there on a daily basis will be a hard habit to break. In fact if anybody sees me arriving in the morning, could you please remind me that I don't work there anymore!

So what does life after Hill West look like? To put in in simple terms I am swapping my job in a classroom pretending to be Miss Honey (from Matilda) to a job on a building site pretending to be Bob the Builder! Project managing house renovations has been a hobby for many years and now I am going to try my hand at it full time. Let's hope I can create some of my own 'Grand Designs' in the future!

So it is not goodbye but au revoir and thank you to Hill West Primary School, I am a better person for having spent time with you.



## Message from the Chair of Governors - Mr Andrew Staples

### Governor Mark Award



Everyone is working within a rapidly changing environment at the moment. Economically, politically or socially, we are all making our own changes. The role of school Governors has also undergone huge modification over the last year. Development isn't a luxury, it is a necessity.



Recent reports on school Governance carry words such as accountability, impact, challenge, professionalism, specific skill sets and evidence. Governing Bodies are becoming Boards of Governors and all members are having to up their game to satisfy increasing expectations. To stay ahead of the game is a real challenge.

As Governors of Hill West Primary School, we decided to look at external verification of our quality of Governance. Although we had a feeling we were on the right lines and doing a good job, we wanted to use a recognised tool to identify our areas for development.

Governor Mark is a national award. It is a kite mark which provides external evaluation of the quality of governance in a school. On their own website they state :

**".. this is a challenging award. Not only does a governing body need to show that it follows good procedures and fulfils statutory duties, but there is a high value placed on evidence of impact - the difference the governing body makes to a school.**

**Sometimes governors work hard and make a real difference, but no proper record is ever made of this. Governor Mark helps to sharpen practice as well as create the framework through which governor support and challenge can be shown through real evidence."**

For us, the right tool for the job.

Having completed their application, evidence grids and impact statements we moved to the next step. On Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February we welcomed the external assessor for a morning of meetings. The opening meeting team included Sir Chris Stone (executive Headteacher of the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership), Tim Sewell (Chair of the Arthur Terry Multi-Academy Trust, Dr Clarke and me.

Governors took time off work to attend. Although excuses would have been easy to find, everyone stepped up and spoke to the assessor in groups, with a focus on specific areas. This was a very telling turn out. We were under no illusion that it was going to be an easy process and it was 'robust' and we were certainly 'challenged'. Just what we were hoping for.

We then had to wait for the Governor Mark Assessment Panel to meet during which time we

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of March we received the reward and the following comments:

**We congratulate you on the high quality of governance shown by your local governing body, which already looked good in the documentation and was confirmed by the assessment visit. In particular we were impressed with:**

- The organisation of the local governing body and the development of the 'integrated' approach to engaging with school improvement;
- The significant support for the local governing body from the Multi Academy Trust, in particular their proactive approach to recruiting governors with specifically identified skill sets;
- The in depth knowledge of the school by the local governing body brought about by clear systems that enable governors to gain first-hand experience of the work of the school;

The effective partnership between the Local Governing Body and the Head Teacher.

As suggested in the report, we will ensure that good procedure is maintained and is monitored to ensure it is effective and we will continue to develop, share good practice and innovate.



Following the award, we have spoken to participants on the National College for Teaching and Leadership accredited National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership on the subject of effective partnerships with Governors with very positive feedback. More dates have been added to the diary. We have also shared our experience with other members of the Arthur Terry MAT.

Without the quality data and reports presented to Governors by the Hill West Leadership Team and Staff, we would not be able to carry out our role effectively. A positive relationship based on challenge and support enables a trained Governing body to achieve the standard expectations.

Continuing to develop a symbiotic relationship between School Staff and Governors is helping us all to evolve and that is what will keep us ahead of the game.



governance, leadership and management.

...achieving excellence in schools