



THE HILL WEST HERALD

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Message from the Head Teacher

I am an avid reader of the Times Educational Supplement published every Friday. It is a mechanism which enables me to keep a current and up-to-date knowledge of all things education and often provides the inspiration for whole school discussions; more recently the limiting factor associated with ability grouping or setting.



In this week's TES however, there was a really interesting article by Tom Russell who was drawing comparisons between childhood illness and adult mental health. His arguments made this point: According to studies carried out in the US, toddlers brought up in excessively sterilised homes ran the risk of failing to build up a tolerance against common bacteria and garden-variety illnesses. (bit.ly/ImmuneClean). More recently, he suggests, similar concerns have been raised regarding the mental health of university students (bit.ly/StudentResilience). Peter Fray, a professor at Boston College, writes of young people "increasingly seeking help for, and apparently having emotional crisis over, problems of everyday life". The underlying issues suggests Tom Russell is a grave one, with cases of students experiencing emotional problems rapidly increasingly.

Tom suggested in his article that from a teachers' perspective, the way our society handles children with kid gloves can be all too clear. Schools, paralysed by a fear of negatively affecting the emotional wellbeing of their students, shy away from honest criticism and firm discipline, allowing low-level disruption and more serious forms of poor behaviour to flourish. Meanwhile parents, unwilling to tackle their progeny's comportment at home, either shift the responsibilities on to schools or make excuses. These actions may be well intentioned, but their consequences are far-reaching. If young people do not learn to take everyday knocks in their stride—be they candid appraisals of work or stern instructions—they emerge from school ill equipped to cope with the setbacks. Crushing realisations become inevitable. One only has to watch the X factor and witness the humiliation of people tricked into believing they possess musical abilities to understand how damning it can be to receive criticism that is long overdue. Encouragement and support for young people is to be commended; but children too have to deal with disappointment and set-backs too.

It is the fear of wounding children's feelings suggested Russell, that runs the real danger of causing psychological harm in the long term, preventing them from acquiring the very resilience that has rightly been recognised as crucial to their development. The analogy with toddlers' natural resistance to common illnesses therefore seems accurate. Any good parent wants to provide a clean, hygienic and safe environment for their offspring. Take that to neurotic extremes however and despite the best of intentions children can be put at risk. If a new generation of young people are to cope with the hurdles that life inevitably throws in their path, "resilience" has to be something that we explicitly develop in our young people.

Primary School Performance Tables



The primary performance tables were published on the 10th December 2015 and show that schools across the country are rising to the challenge of raised standards and exceptions for all pupils. The government have raised the bar by introducing higher floor standards, banning calculators for maths test and introducing a spelling, punctuation and grammar test. Figures also show that the difference in performance between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has continued to fall, with more pupils from all backgrounds now starting secondary school ready to succeed. Schools Minister Nick Gibb said: "The increased performance at primary levels across the country demonstrates how this government is delivering on its commitment to provide educational excellence everywhere and ensure every child benefits from the best possible start in life, no matter where they come from." Figures published by Ofsted as part of its annual report at the start of this month (December 2015) further underline the impressive progress made by primary schools across the country over the past 5 years, with an increase of 18 percentage points in the proportion of good and outstanding schools compared to 2010. Pleasing too is the fact that converter academies (of which we are one), excellent schools which start from a high bar, are outperforming the national average and show continued improvement.

Of the 377 primary schools in Birmingham we feature heavily in the top 25:

- ◇ 18th for the percentage of children achieving a Level 5 or better in reading, writing and maths at the end of KS2
- ◇ 22nd for the percentage of children achieving a Level 4 or better in reading, writing and maths at the end of KS2
- ◇ 27th for the percentage of children achieving a Level 4b or better in reading, writing and maths at the end of KS2.
- ◇ 24th for the percentage of children achieving a Level 4 or better over the last three years (2012-2015).
- ◇ On average pupils leave Hill West at a Level 5c.



Department
for Education

Performance tables for 2015 results will be the last to use levels to assess performance at the end of primary school

We were extremely proud of the success of our pupil and hard work for our staff as reflected in our KS2 results in 2015.

- ◇ KS2 progress was significantly above average in all subjects
- ◇ Disadvantaged KS1 pupils had an average point score equal to or above the national score for all other pupils in writing and maths.
- ◇ The proportion of disadvantaged pupils that attained at least Level 5 was equal to or above the national figure for all other pupils in Reading

Hill West Nursery Nativity

High up in a holly tree sat a little robin. He had a handsome red breast, silky brown wings and beady black eyes. There were two things that Robin liked best in all the world: eating worms and singing. He LOVED to sing. Christmas Eve came, and as Robin sat in his tree he heard the lovely sound of singing. Lots of people stood at the doorway of a



house in the village.

They held lanterns and

they sang and sang. They were carol singers. Robin thought that the carol singing was a nice thing to be

doing, so he joined in as loudly as he could! Next Robin saw a beautiful Christmas tree, decorated with pretty

lights. He also saw some children. They looked excited, they were listening for some-

thing. Robin got very excited by hearing Santa's bells! He jumped up and down. He

chirped and chirped, and sang and sang. In

the distance he could hear some wonderful music. It was a brass band. It got closer and

closer, and louder and louder. Robin thought the band was wonderful. He decided to sing

along. Next Robin followed some stars. They

led him to a stable. They led him to the baby Jesus. He is very special thought Robin.

I am going to sing for him.



Well done Mrs Jones and
the staff and children in
Nursery



Most recently we have been privileged enough to spend two whole days at one of our partnership schools to conduct a peer review. The staff, pupils and governors at Slade Primary school gave us a great welcome and were keen to hear what we thought their school does really well. They also



wanted to hear what we thought should be their areas for development post our visit. During the two days we observed in lessons, spoke with senior and middle leaders, met with pupils, looked at books and had in-depth conversations with



the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and Chair of Governors. The two days were thoroughly enjoyable and it was evident that the children come to school ready to learn, are eager to please their teachers and the teachers and senior team work extremely hard to meet the needs of the whole school community. We particularly liked some

of their reward systems for behaviour and attendance and learnt a great deal about the need for the highest aspirations for all our pupils across the whole partnership. Our learning partnership now serves over 1000 primary aged pupils and there is much we can learn from and share with each other not only in terms of teaching, learning and assessment but also at all levels of leadership too. Special thanks go to the Helen Hastilow Head Teacher at Slade for the opportunity. We look forward to visiting Brookvale in February, Mere Green in April and welcoming a team here to Hill West in June.



Mrs Rebecca George

Phase Leader

Year 2 Nativity

At this very busy time of year there is one event in school that I look forward to the most – Year Twos production of The Nativity.

As Christmas fast approaches we can all get caught up in the swirl of activity around Christmas time and can miss the true meaning of this wonderful Christian celebration. However our superb Year Two children are certainly not confused about the real reason for Christmas celebrations. If you were lucky enough to enjoy the performances then I'm sure you will agree that our Year Two children portrayed The Nativity Story in a confident, mature, serious yet amusing way. Performing in All Saints Church made the performance even more magical than usual and special thanks go to Reverend Lehey for inviting us into our local church to perform.



All of the children had clearly worked tirelessly to learn their lines and the words to all of the songs within a very short space of time and it was fantastic to see their confidence grow as they rehearsed and finally performed. All of the children looked wonderful in their costumes and it was evident from the buzz of excitement that they were all very much looking forward to telling their Nativity Story.



Reception and Year 1 also added a special element to The Nativity by performing their Santa Claus songs. It was clear to see that they also had all been practising hard and although for some of our children it was their very first public performance they were not phased by this at all. Well done Reception and Year One.



Thanks go to Mr Britton, Miss Brown, Miss Bracher and Mrs Ford for all of their hard work in organising and directing such fantastic performances.



Well done Kingfishers and Owls you were all superb and I'm sure it's an experience that you'll never forget.



Miss Bracher and Mrs Ford

Year 2 Teaching Assistants

Conkers Capers



Year 2 were very excited when we attended Conkers. When we arrived Owls and Kingfishers met the park rangers who were fantastic with their knowledge of habitats. The park rangers guided Year 2 to the Conker Choo train to begin our woodland adventure. The first stop was a nature discovery walk where the children were given maps and then had to forage through the forest collecting various items. They were encouraged by the rangers to become wildlife detectives and to use their imagination and senses to explore the various shapes, sounds and colours which were abundant at Conkers. The children were given the opportunity to create a woodland collage with their items. Our day was an amazing and fun packed experience. The trip consolidated well with the topic on habitats.

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The children were eager to share all their knowledge from the classroom with the park rangers. It was great to see the children using their skills and knowledge outside the classroom. Overall Year 2 had a fantastic time!!



Celebrating Success: Our R.E. Audit

Why are SACRE auditing R.E in schools?

to make sure that safeguarding concerns in Birmingham are met in Collective Worship and RE and reflect 'British Values'
to check that Collective Worship and RE contributes to a broad and balanced curriculum
to consider the nature and character of the provision of RE and Collective Worship



Dr. Marius Felderhof (SACRE)

On Tuesday 1st December, we had a visit from Dr. Marius Felderhof, who is part of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), and was instrumental in writing the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus for R.E. Dr. Felderhof and the SACRE team are carrying out an R.E audit in every school in Birmingham.

As part of his visit, Dr. Felderhof observed an R.E lesson taught by Miss Robinson in Squirrels and an act of Collective Worship led by Miss Hyde in Year 6, as well as having a discussion with myself and Dr Clarke about our school background, our curriculum, and our approach to R.E and Collective Worship.

Hill West received a glowing report. Here is some of the feedback we got following our audit

“There was a warm and welcoming atmosphere in the school. The commitment to learning was evident in the headteacher and staff, and with their love of learning setting excellent and inspiring role models for the children.”

“Collective Worship is ‘wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character’ but is also inclusive....
...The act was engaging for the children and ended with a short prayer of thanksgiving, and thus contributing a serious spiritual dimension.”

“The lesson that was observed was focused on the theme of forgiveness and explored, in the first instance, through two Biblical parables...This was an excellent lesson.”

What is Collective Worship?

Collective Worship is legally required to take place every school day and ‘shall be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character’ (1988 Education Act). Collective Worship should provide pupils with space for reflection and/or should be evocative and challenging.

At Hill West we cover a variety of themes in our Collective Worship, including current affairs, exploring British Values and reflecting on stories, themes and symbols from a range of faiths.

Mrs Rachael Evans

Robins Class Teacher

The First Few Weeks in Reception

On the week beginning 7th September, we welcomed our new children into our Reception classes, Wrens and Robins. It was to be a new chapter in their little lives and probably the bravest step they have ever had to make. There was a mixture of emotions throughout the classrooms for the first week. Some children had not yet experienced leaving their parents all day and the thought of being so grown up was very scary. Other children were excited to see their friends from their nurseries that they had not seen over the summer holidays.

Alongside the children, many of the Reception staff were also very nervous. I was new to the school and I was trying very hard to become familiar with Hill West's daily routine, policies and procedures and Mrs Langhorn and Miss Roberts were also new to working in Reception. However, this did not perturb us and we all agreed that the most important job we had to do was to ensure that all the children were to have the best first day of school ever!

The children enjoyed exploring and investigating the activities available and they soon forgot how nervous they were. These involved;

- Creating shapes with sensory playdough
- Painting self portraits
- Small world imaginative play
- Sand and water play
- Building with construction materials
- Exploring even more activities in the play pod



Experimenting with salt. With the help of Mr Minto, the children sculptured an ice castle!



The children tracing over chalk shapes using water in the play pod



Children working collaboratively to build a house from Lego.

As the days rolled by, the children became more familiar with the school routine, each other and their teachers. Fewer children were coming in upset and most children were coming into class with a lovely smile on their face. By creating a happy and safe environment and providing opportunities to be creative, explorative and investigative they have been able to achieve a high level of well-being and involvement. They are now all ready for developing their skills and knowledge through exciting and fun opportunities.

I like playing in the pod the best. Its got good things to play with.

I  School

I love school because I get to play with my friends and I like painting.

After giving the children a little time to settle into the school routine, we invited the parents into a 'Phonics Inspire' session, which gave them the opportunity to learn how phonics is taught through practical and fun activities in Reception. Parents enjoyed supporting their children to complete activities as it provided them with a better understanding of how children learn through play. I think everyone particularly enjoyed icing and decorating the biscuits!



All the children in Reception are developing their own personalities and every day their self-esteem and self-confidence is growing. It has been a pleasure to get to know them all and we are looking forward to spending the rest of the year with them.

Mr Harry Britton

Class Teacher—Kingfishers



The McGuire Speech Programme

My name is Mr. Britton, three years ago that was almost impossible for me to say without stammering and stuttering my way through. For those of you who do not know I have a crippling stammer.

From an early age throughout school and my adult years I have stuttered, mumbled and avoided saying one word out of every three spoken. Imagine being asked a simple question that warrants a simple answer, but when you speak your words vanish, your chest freezes and your throat is strangled by fear to the point where you find it impossible to enunciate even the smallest of sounds. For me speaking was a fear that burdened me every time I was asked a question, spoke in conversation or even ordered food at a restaurant.

However, three years ago I discovered the McGuire Speech Programme. I had heard about this programme through household name, Gareth Gates and his struggle with his stammer when on the talent show, Pop Idol (Now the McGuire Programme includes stammerers, Kelly Brown, Scottish rugby player and Musharaf from Educating Yorkshire) . Reluctantly, I decided to attend a McGuire speech course in Cardiff. It was an intensive residential course run by people who stammer. Straightaway they stripped my speech back to the point where I was introduced to a new way of breathing called costal breathing. This is where I actively inhale and exhale air as I speak, similar to that of singers and much different to how everybody speaks which is through their crural diaphragms. By combining my new breathing strategy with non-avoidance techniques I was able to control about 90% of what I said – much better than stumbling on one in every three words spoken.

As the five-day course progressed I grew in confidence using a range of speaking techniques in various speaking challenges such as talking on the phone, ordering food and speaking in groups. My final challenge was the soapbox challenge. I had to stand on a soapbox in Cardiff city centre in -front of a couple hundred people and tell them my story as someone who stammers. You can imagine how nervous I was, but I managed to do this with courage and confidence – I had come a long way since the days of struggling to answer questions at school.

Brimming with confidence and my new voice I decided to work towards a career I had always wanted to be a part of, but one which my stammer had held me back; that was teaching. Following many conversations, phone calls and newspaper interviews about my journey I am now a confident teacher.

I still have a stammer, as a stammer is not a disease and therefore cannot be cured, but I am able to control it. However, with any life-long fear I still have to be courageous, work hard and persevere at speaking. I urge anyone who has a crippling stammer or knows anyone who has got one to contact the McGuire Speech Programme as through hard work and support it can be controlled.

Mrs Nichola Leeson

Deputy Head Teacher

Continued Professional Development is a key feature of life at Hill West, with staff being given amazing opportunities to be the very best that they can be. Recently, my continued professional development has been focused on:



- **Aspire to Headship**
- **The National SENCo Award**

Aspire to Headship

The Aspire to Headship programme began in February 2015, run by the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership in collaboration with Fusion Leadership and Birmingham City University. The aim of the programme was to develop educational leadership so that I am equipped for the challenges of headship.

During the year long course, we explored the context of the changing landscape of education, particularly relevant during the time of the National Election, and the part that we would have to play as future Head Teachers. We also explored the behaviours, and developed the skills, knowledge and attributes of a successful Head Teacher.

One of the most valuable experiences of the programme was developing learning sets with other participants from across the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership and beyond-leaders from Arthur Terry, Stockland Green, Slade Primary and Boldmere Primary. In these learning sets we carried out educational research and gave a final presentation to a group of Head Teachers before graduating from the programme in November.



The National Award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordination (SENCo)



In 2014, new Government legislation meant that any new SENCos must achieve the National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination within 3 years of appointment to ensure that the SENCO is fully equipped for the role. The Award had to be validated at a Master degree level by a recognized awarding body.

Having taken on the role of SENCo in September 2013, I decided to commence my year-long National Award with Birmingham University in September 2014, as the new Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs was introduced at this time.

The course provided professional development as a SENCo, and gave me an opportunity to reflect upon and improve my practice whilst learning more about the coordination of special educational needs. There were two elements to the course:

Teaching which took place at Birmingham University over ten days across the school year and covered:

- the role of the SENCO & the statutory framework for SEND
- effective approaches to identification, assessment & intervention
- responding to diversity (areas of need) – cognition & learning; communication & interaction; behaviour, emotional & social difficulties; physical & sensory impairment
- pupil participation, parent partnership & inter-service collaboration
- inclusive provision management
- developing & sustaining effective SEND leadership
- professional development to improve practice

Three 4,000 word written coursework assignments at Masters level:

- A Reflective learning log written after each taught session
- A portfolio looking at all aspects of the SENCo role and how I have developed these at Hill West
- A professional development project which was based on reading and a research project based in my own school. My focus for this project was on: how can we effectively support the language development of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage using the social and medical models of disability?

My final assignment was submitted in August and at the beginning of this new school year I finally received the confirmation that I had been successful in achieving this award.

What's next?

My professional development continues this year with the completion of the third year of my Masters in Educational Leadership. I just have my final dissertation to complete! Wish me luck!



Following on from the Aspire to Headship programme, I am currently working with Miss Helen McKay, the Head Teacher at St. Michaels' School in Lichfield, receiving coaching support and an opportunity to shadow and work with leaders in different contexts.



Pupil Conferencing

Celebrating the Achievements of All Our Children

It has been almost a year since our Ofsted inspection and much has changed as a result of our drive and commitment to continue to improve our school. Following our inspection, we reflected on our key priorities and it was clear that an area we wanted to develop further was how we share information about the achievements and progress of our children with parents, carers and the children themselves. With this in mind, we set about implementing new procedures across the school and, at the beginning of this academic year, we began an exciting new initiative by introducing 'pupil conferencing' to our staff, children and parents. Now, after two successful conferencing sessions with our children, it's time to celebrate the success we have had with it so far.

What is Pupil Conferencing?

At Hill West, our ethos is firmly rooted in a shared belief that every child is an individual, each with their own unique skills, talents and interests; all of our pupils deserve to reach their full learning potential. As teachers, we already know that children make accelerated progress when they become more independent and take ownership of their learning, which is why pupil conferencing has such a positive impact on the outcomes of our pupils as it facilitates and encourages children to become reflective learners.

During pupil conferencing sessions, children lead a discussion with their teacher or teaching assistant and are guided to look for ways to improve their own learning by reflecting on what they have achieved. The children discuss what they think their strengths and areas for development are and negotiate a set of targets with their teacher that will take their learning forward. By taking responsibility for this discussion, our children are more engaged in the learning process, becoming aware of their own progress and what they need to do next to achieve their goals and ambitions.

What does Conferencing Look Like in Our School?

We have now had two weeks of pupil conferencing with all of our children and, after each cycle, we have reflected on our approach to conferencing to ensure that our children get a personalised and meaningful experience.

Each term, we schedule a whole week to conduct our pupil conferencing. During this week, children have a one-to-one, twenty-minute conferencing session with their class teacher or teaching assistant. Before the children begin the conferencing process,

they are given time, in class, to reflect on their personal learning journey over the half term. Our children are encouraged to participate in self and peer-assessment of work they have produced and discuss their learning with their peers. To facilitate this autonomous self-reflection, we have created child friendly learning journeys for reading, writing, mathematics and science, which break down National Curriculum expectations into simple and accessible child friendly statements. These documents are in the front of children's books and comprise a comprehensive set of statements of expected skills and knowledge in each subject, building progressively through the year so that children can assess themselves against what they should know and be able to do.

During the actual child-teacher led discussions, our children are carefully questioned and guided into reflecting on their main achievements in all core subject areas and the wider curriculum. They are asked to identify progress they have made towards

previously set targets and think about any barriers they have encountered. It is important during these interviews that the children lead these conversations and use the language of learning, referring to their child friendly documents to identify their personal strengths and areas for development against curriculum expectations. To encourage ownership of this process, each child in the school has a set of highlighters, which they use during pupil conferencing to highlight the skills and knowledge they have acquired during a half term (one colour per half term). This gives children a fantastic visual representation of where they are in their learning, how much they have progressed since the previous conferencing session and where they need to go next.



What Do Our Children and Teachers Think About Pupil Conferencing?

I really like the one-to-one time we get with our teachers because we get to celebrate our achievements, rather than group achievements... I didn't think I was doing well in maths but now I can see that I'm getting a lot better and I feel more confident.

- Annabelle Shaw, Foxes, Year 6

Pupil Conferencing has had a really positive impact on learning and progress. Children in my class now have a clear knowledge of where they are, where they should be, what they need to do next, when this is to be achieved and how I can help them on this journey.

- Miss Robinson, Squirrels, Year 4

I like it because it tells us what we can do ... We have a chat with Miss Jones and she says that I'm 'really good'.

- Isabella Reynolds, Swifts, Year 1

The whole process has really motivated my children ... I like that it gives the children individual and meaningful targets which allow us, as teachers, to personalize learning to meet the needs of each child.

-Miss Jones, Swifts, Year 1

It's really good because we get to know what we are good at and what I'm working towards. I like to highlight my learning journey. It makes me proud of what I've done.

- Jed Carroll, Rabbits, Year 3

Pupil Conferencing provides the perfect opportunity to gain a deeper insight of the whole child, to build meaningful and positive relationships, to establish trust and mutual respect.

- Miss Hyde, Otters, Year 6

I think it's really good, not just for me, but for all children. It allows us to see what we can achieve with effort and setting challenging goals. It has helped me think about what else I need to do in my learning and it makes me feel really proud of myself - like I have done something special.

- Tom Handy, Foxes, Year 6

Miss Jenny Robinson

Squirrels Class Teacher

Wroxeter Roman City

This term, for our school trip, year 4 decided to make the excursion to Wroxeter Roman City, for an experience in Roman life.

It is safe to say that we had a fantastic day, one that will be remembered and talked about for the rest of the school year, I am sure.

After a coach ride, comprising of 50 minutes of Christingle songs, we finally arrived at our destination. We were greeted by a real (not so real) Roman lady, who showed us around her old city, informed us of life in Roman Britain and told us lots of other interesting facts. She was able to set the scene wonderfully for us and after a warm welcome and a sit down inside the warm, cosy museum we were taken outside and treated slightly differently.

Firstly, we became Roman slaves. Then, we were made to march for our lunch and finally we were lucky enough to experience a real Roman toilet, an experience that we might not be repeating soon.

It is no surprise that on the coach journey home we had lots of droopy eyes.



Miss Bolton

Class Teacher—Swallows

Aston Hall

On Tuesday 20th October Year 1 went on a visit to Aston Hall. We were all very excited to learn all about the fairy tale Cinderella.



We had two very exciting activities to complete whilst we were at Aston Hall. We took part in a story telling experience where we got to learn all about the story of Cinderella. We learned that Aston Hall was built in the 1600s which is a similar time period to when the story Cinderella was written. We all got to have a go at playing different characters from the story and acting it out in different rooms in the house. It was really fun as we got to dress up in old clothes and use lots of exciting props to tell the story. We had a wonderful time doing this activity.

As well as acting out the story of Cinderella, we also got to do lots of arts and crafts activities. We made our own magic wand based on the Fairy Godmother's from the story. We also thought hard about the characters from the story and made small puppets which we decorated with material for their clothes. As we had learned that the characters in the story went to a ball we decided to make some masks to wear. We used lots of sequins and glitter to decorate our own masks to wear to a ball. We ended up having so much fun that we used up all their glitter and sequins!

The weather was fantastic on our visit and we even had some time after our lunch to play outside. We were very creative in our play and made our own tree art on the floor with branches and leaves - it was great fun collecting it all!

All of us had a brilliant day!



Mrs Kerry-Lynn Lampitt

Unqualified Instructor — Year 6

Shugborough Hall

Year Six



Year six were in for a treat with their **first activity of the day**.....

The Victorian Kitchen:

Mrs Stearn, the head cook, runs the day-to-day kitchen along with her kitchen maid. Both firmly believe it is still 1871. Mrs Stearn keeps a tight reign on her kitchen and no wonder with so many frivolous and flighty young maids to keep an eye on.



Children had to make sure that their hands were washed and their nails clean, before she took them into her domain, dominated by a large working range and row upon

row of copper pots and jelly moulds. Here she has many 19th century gadgets from the ice-cream maker and lemon squeezer to a potato ricer and a floor washing donkey.

Children had the honour of helping Mrs Stearn to prepare a meal for Lord and Lady Lichfield, along with some biscuits for the nursery, which the children actually brought back to school for a snack!



Year six children had the opportunity to have a look around 'The National Trust Gift Shop'.

The National Trust Gift Shop'.

There was a range of gifts for all the children to purchase a treat as a memory of their visit to

'Shugborough Hall'.





Second Activity.....

The Victorian Classroom:

Children put on traditional Victorian school dress; the boys had to have a collar and the girls a Victorian school dress. The children were each given a penny to pay for the lesson!

Although the teacher was very strict, the children really enjoyed this lesson and got to experience the true Victorian classroom. They had the opportunity to use a slate board and write with a



Victorian ink pen, most of them got covered in the ink!

Having to recite their times tables to the beat of the cane was a challenge!

Third Activity.....

Tour of the grounds:

Lastly, the children really enjoyed a tour around some of the Victorian shops and transport. The children got to see the internationally renowned collection of horse-drawn carriages, including coaches formerly belonging to the Earl of Shrewsbury at Ingestre, and the Dyott family of Lichfield.



Mrs Durkin and Mrs Thompson

Lunchtime Assistant Learning Mentors

Remember, remember the 5th of November

Friday 5th November saw the children enjoy their annual bonfire lunch. The menu offered tempting treats such as: hot dog and chips, chicken curry with rice, or jacket potatoes with cheese and beans. Dessert was a delicious, sticky chocolate cake.

The children really enjoy our themed lunches, they are always very popular. We have many of them throughout the year, including: Chinese New Year, Valentine's Day, Easter and Christmas lunch. We also celebrate special occasions too, such as the recent royal wedding when the children enjoyed a fish and chip picnic with ice cream outside in the July sunshine.



If your child usually brings a packed lunch to school, they can still participate in the themed lunches. You will be notified in advance of an upcoming event, you can then simply make a payment on ParentPay.

Mrs Langhorn

Wrens Class Teacher



Reception Meet Father Christmas!

What could be more exciting than meeting Father Christmas? On Thursday 10th December the Reception classes leapt out of their beds and arrived at school for an early start. The coach journey seemed to take forever but once we were there it was definitely worth it!

The station was simply magical. With twinkling lights, reindeer, and an enormous Christmas tree in the centre, it was all very exciting. Then all of a sudden a snowman appeared and started giving everyone 'high-fives' and shaking hands alongside his reindeer friend.



Our train was announced over the loud speaker and we made our way to the platform. The steam train was very big, very noisy and very smoky. We had our own section of the train, and once we had all found our seats the first question we asked was... 'When can we have lunch?'

The train set off with a clear 'CHOO CHOO'. It was exciting to go over the bridges and through the tunnels. The train passed right by the West Midlands Safari Park and although we didn't see any animals on the way there, (it was quite a cold day), on the way back we saw deer, rhinoceros and the elephant family including a very cute baby elephant.

We arrived at the station and just as we were about to ask if it was time for lunch again, a buzz of excitement rippled down the carriage—

Father Christmas was here! He truly was a jolly old soul, and he greeted each and every one of us with a hand shake and a wink. The children who had been really good this year received a gift, which of course was all of us!





Next for the most exciting thing of all– lunch time! Finally we were allowed to tuck into our sandwiches and biscuits. On the journey back we played with our new toys. When we got off the train we got the chance to have a look at the steam engine. Mrs Evans got on board and pretended to put coal in the fire. It was very hot in there!

Then it was time to get back on the coach and return to school. Lots of children had a nap on the way back, all of that excitement had worn us out.

It was a marvellous way to get us in the mood for Christmas. Only a few sleeps to go!

Merry Christmas everyone xx



Miss Lara Jones

Swifts Class Teacher

Friday 25th September- Safari Day 1 After a long flight and checking into Keys Hotel, we had a day of rest and were ready for our first action-packed day... safari!

We had an early start and met our translator, John, and our driver Moses. We headed off on the long drive to Tarangire National Park. Nearer to the National Park, we started to see members of the Maasai Tribe. There were lots of men and women walking along the roads, herding cattle, carrying baskets of food on their heads and collecting water, including small children. John told us that the Maasai will spend most of their time away from their home, herding and caring for their cattle and many of them will be boys no older than ten.

We eventually arrived at the National Park we ate our packed lunch in the sunshine! From there we entered into Tarangire. It was in the middle of the dry season, so the landscape was quite barren and there was very little water. Our first stop was to one of the few watering holes, where we saw zebra, warthogs and giraffes. Then our driver zoomed on and we spotted some elephants. These were much larger in real life than we expected! They came very close to our jeep- close enough for a selfie! We were also lucky enough to see a lioness pounce on zebra. Fortunately, she wasn't quick enough and the zebra bounded back up the hill, making a barrage of noise as they went! The lioness sulked back to her tree where she lay, waiting for her next opportunity.

We continued to drive across the huge landscape and saw lots of other fantastic animals. A highlight for me was seeing a herd of elephants cross the nearly dry river bed, spraying muddy water over themselves whenever they could! The sun soon began to descend in the sky, and before we knew it, it was time to make the long drive back to the gate of the park and head towards our night's accommodation.

Saturday 26th September- Safari Day 2 We woke up at 5.30am to catch the sunrise. It was stunning and we both felt privileged to experience it as the birds started to sing strange tunes around us. From there we had a big breakfast and after saying thank you and good bye to our hosts, we set off in the jeep to Ngorangora Crater. As we drove through the Ngorangora gate, there were monkeys hanging in the trees and sitting on the sides of the road, watching to see if there was anything up for grabs! We carried on driving up to the top of the crater. We got out and the views were incredible. The landscape was so vast, it was hard to capture it in a photograph and it was amazing to think that there were so many animals living in it.

We jumped back into the jeep and began the steep descent into the crater. On the way, we stopped in a Maasai camp. The Maasai use this as a way to make money to pay for water and materials so we gave them \$50 and we were welcomed into the village. The men and women performed a welcome dance and we were asked to join in by being given traditional beaded necklaces and shown the dance. After this, we were shown around the different huts, all made from sticks and straw, bound together by cow and goat manure. An elder of the tribe took us into his home. There was a small fire in the middle and bed-like frames either side. He explained that the man would sleep by himself and the women and children in the other bed. This is because it is Maasai tradition that the men have more than one wife, meaning he can move around and stay in any of his houses. This Elder had 4 wives and 12 children!

From this, we moved further down into the crater and started to spot some animals!



First we saw a hyena. It was walking across the road so we slowed down. It stopped, looked at us and carried on, just to lie down on a ditch next to the road. We carried on from there, soon to see a male lion sleeping by a rock. We watched carefully as two brave warthogs walked up to him... we waited in anticipation as the lion raised his head; he gave them one look of warning and they ran off and he returned to sleeping! We couldn't believe it!

After lots of animal spotting and sightseeing, we were ready for lunch, so we headed down to hippo lake, where we ate our lunch watching the hippos swim around in the water. From here, we headed around to a forested area, where we saw more exotic birds and zebras and then began the long climb up and out of the crater. As we reached the top, we were surprised with an elephant! It was wandering down the road and nothing was going to get in its way. It plodded along slowly as we waited and eventually could get past... Only in Tanzania! We settled back into our seats after all of the excitement and prepared for a long drive home to Moshi.

The safari was an incredible experience and we both felt so lucky to have been able to do it, something that will be treasured in our memories forever.

Monday 28th September- Day 1 at James Ole Millya School

An early start for us as we waited to get picked up by John and our driver Honest at 7am. John explained that the school is in a rural area so there was a lack of road networks. We soon discovered this as we turned off a tarmac road and onto dirt tracks, very bumpy indeed! It took about 35 minutes to get to school and we travelled through villages and past lots of schools. One school we drove past had all the children outside, crouched down and the teacher walking around them. We asked John about what the children were doing and he said that they were receiving their punishments, which we then saw. The teacher started whipping children as she walked around and we were horrified. We spoke further to John about this and he said it is illegal, however, lots of teachers (especially older generation teachers) are still doing it and not being caught.

We carried on and eventually arrived at James Ole Millya School. The school is bright and vibrant, made out of two long blocks. We were greeted by the head teacher Monika and were shown to the staff room. We were then greeted formally to all of the staff and taken outside for a welcome from the children. They performed songs to welcome us we introduced ourselves to them. The children then went into class and we designed our teaching timetable for the week and presented our gifts and resources to the staff. They were very pleased and grateful and couldn't wait to start using them.

Our first class for the day was Kindergarten. We walked into the classroom and it was lovely to see displays from Mr Lackenby and Miss McNally that they were still using and the creation of a book corner. We watched an English lesson, where the teacher had already started to use things we had brought to support and the children enjoyed this. The atmosphere was very different to our Reception. All of the children sat at desks in silence whilst the teacher talked and they repeated. They were invited up to the chalk board to move words and pictures around, but it was very formal and some of the children were not engaged.

From Hill West, we had brought lots of P.E equipment, so every afternoon, we took out a different year group to set up a carousel of activities so that we could model to the teachers how they could use the equipment. The children don't do formal P.E lessons, they have a games and outdoor activity session so we thought that this set up would work well. We did lots of shooting, throwing and catching and traditional games such as hot potato, which the children loved! The school's playing ground is a big dust field with no shade and we definitely felt the heat. It didn't bother the children and they carried on whilst Miss Brown and I took turns in the little shade we could find!



Tuesday 29th September- Day 2 at James Ole Millya School Another early start for us and we were on the bumpy road to school again. We arrived and the children were doing their morning chores whilst the staff were having coffee and tea in the staff room. This felt very odd for us and we both felt uncomfortable sitting down whilst the children were cleaning and sorting out the classrooms. We went into Standard 2 first of all, where we had planned a times table session. We wanted to show the teachers how to make counting and times tables practical, so we used number cards, songs and fireball. It was hard to fit the times table song in Swahili, but with the help of our translation dictionary and our translator, we managed it! The children really enjoyed this and there was much more of a 'buzz' around the room than before.



From there we went into Kindergarten and introduced them doubling. We drew butterflies on card and used buttons to put spots on (the same amount on each side). The children understood this quickly and we then moved onto writing them as number sentences too on post-it notes so that they could stick them up on the board. We spoke to the teacher after the lesson about children we felt that had found it difficult and what would happen next, She couldn't answer and just said that they carry on. This shocked us, as there was no formal tracking or assessment of the children until they do their final exams in Year 4 and Year 6.



Wednesday 30th September- Day 3 at James Ole Millya School Today was our first day teaching in KS2. It is compulsory for the children to learn English and from looking through the children's text books, we saw that they needed to learn about types of words (nouns, verbs etc.). We decided to focus on nouns, verbs and adjectives. We had created Y6 verbs, nouns, adjective cards and after a brief explanation, we asked the children to sort them into the correct groups. Once we had done that, we played some more games, using the terminology and then showed them how to structure sentences with verbs, nouns and adjectives. The children then wrote their own on post-it notes and shared them. We also asked the children to create their own cards and we made a word bank on the wall of nouns, verbs and adjectives so that they could refer to it in future. Monika, the head teacher came to observe this and she was really pleased with the use of resources and we gave her more ideas how to approach other different aspects of their English curriculum.



Another highlight of this day was also an English lesson in Year 3, where we taught the children body parts through the song 'Head, shoulders, knees and toes'. The children were very enthusiastic in their singing and picked up the words very quickly. We chose to use a song as a cross-curricular link, demonstrating the teachers how to get the learning out of the text book and incorporate other elements of learning. To assess, we then asked them to draw a body and add in the body parts themselves, again, showing the teacher how this is an easy assessment tool.

Thursday 1st October- Day 4 at James Ole Millya School We started off the day in upper KS2 again, working in Standard 5 today. We introduced animals in English using flash cards from the alphabet strip we had brought with us. The children picked this up very quickly and we moved on to adjectives and how we could describe the animals. We showed them how to construct basic sentences in English and they wrote them on whiteboards to show and read to the class. The children really enjoyed this and were amazed by the whiteboards and how you could erase your work and write again!

After this was kindergarten. We had brought over lots of role play and dressing up with us and we wanted to demonstrate to the teachers how to use this. We told the story of Sleeping Beauty, getting the children involved by dressing up and role-playing the story. They were so excited to see and use the outfits and it was lovely to see the children being children and having lots of fun and not sitting down at a desk. From there, we asked the children to draw and label the favourite part of the story. As you can expect, the boys drew the dragons and the girls drew the princess!



After morning play, we were asked by Monika to deliver a training session for the staff. We had found lots of resources and equipment that the school had been given from us and from previous visits that looked untouched and we had voiced our concern in the week. Monika had explained that the staff didn't understand how to use all of it so asked if we would do the session. We organised the cupboard and used a variety of equipment to show and demonstrate to the staff some of the ways in which they could use them. It surprised Miss Brown and I that they didn't know lots of things that we would consider to be basic, such as what glitter is or how to use it. The staff really appreciated this and seemed much more positive about the equipment and gained a better understanding of how to use it.



Friday 2nd October- Day 5 at James Ole Millya School

Today was our last day at James Ole Millya and we couldn't believe how fast it had gone! We arrived at school a little later today because we made some stops on the way. First was a trip to a charity that our translator, John, helps to support. It supports young girls and women who have run away from home due to being forced into female genital mutilation (something that is common in the Maasai tribes). The charity gives the girls somewhere to stay and gives them work to help support themselves.



We eventually arrived at school and it was a hive of activity. The whole school were preparing for our leaving ceremony and for the arrival of the District Commissioner of Education. We helped with the preparations and the girls showed us how they prepare and cook the meals.



The District Commissioner arrived and we were asked to demonstrate activities and resources that we had used in the week with different children. The District Commissioner is trying to encourage more teachers to move away from the text book and wanted to learn more about how we did that. He really enjoyed the activities and we had a lengthy discussion as to how we made and implemented the resources.

Our farewell dinner was spectacular, full of speeches and performances by children and adults. The highlight was our presentation of gifts; an English to Swahili translation t-shirt and zebra print wrap. We wore these with pride, and after lots of cuddles from the children, it was time to say good bye. The week went so quickly and we couldn't believe it was over as we drove back along the bumpy dirt track for the last time.



Mrs Karen White

Family Support Worker

Macmillan Cake Sale



Last year's cake sale was a great success with the school council raising over £232.81 so it was hard to imagine how the school council could encourage the children and parents to bake more cakes and buy more too.

The children on the school council (Theo, Cailen, Alice, Tallula, Damien, Jessica, Philip, Charlie, Olivia and Darren) set about their plan for the greatest Macmillan cake sale EVER. They spoke to their class mates about the event, how important it is to raise money for Macmillan and how much the cakes would cost.

Mrs White spoke to the school admin team and lots of Groupcall reminders were sent out. On the morning of the cake sale, the school council and Mrs White arranged to meet in the KS1 entrance. We all thought there be a few cakes ready for us to sell but when we arrived we were blown away by the sheer number of cakes awaiting us. There were cake boxes, tins and Tupperware everywhere and still children and parents bringing more in. In fact, there were so many cakes that Mrs White had to ask Mrs Scandrett to help her load the trollies.

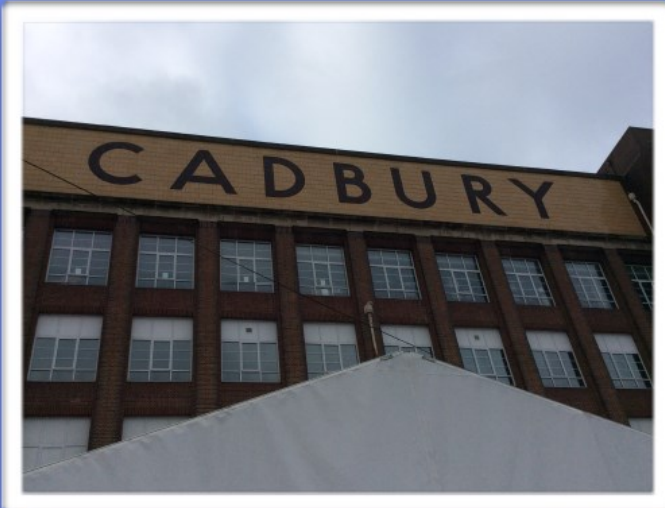
Two teams of children and Mrs White and Mrs Scandrett went around the school to sell the cakes to the children. They sold so well that we had to keep re-loading the trollies. Once we had been around every class we still had a lot of cakes left, Mrs Scandrett came up with a very clever idea of selling more cakes after school. Another Groupcall was sent out and the cakes were put on tables outside KS2 ready to be sold. Parents bought them, brother and sisters bought them, Grandmas and Grandad's bought them....soon there were no cakes left!



Year Three were very excited to visit one of the most famous companies in Birmingham, if not the world - the famous Cadbury Chocolate Factory in Bourneville.



Setting off early in the morning, the excitement of both the children and adults on the coach built as we made our way across town. After a little too long in traffic on the Aston expressway, we arrived safely at Cadbury World. Stepping down from the coach we quickly found our way to the Classroom to find out all about how chocolate is made. As we passed the factory, a delicious smell wafted across our path, "Its chocolate!" cried the children, sniffing great lungfuls of the wonderful scent.



In the classroom, we learnt all about the amazing cacao bean and how it was discovered and then used to make chocolate. We looked at some cacao bean pods and looked at the beans themselves before finding out more about how they are used.

We found out that the beans are harvested and dried in Africa and then make a long journey across several countries and by ship across the sea to finally arrive in Great Britain.



Did you know that the cacao bean is only the start of the process? They are roasted and dried, then squashed to make cacao butter and cacao mass. Both of these ingredients are used to make many different types of chocolate.



We found out about what the workers in the factory had to do. Deacon volunteered to dress up as a chocolate factory worker. He looked very strange dressed in his special outfit! "It's quite comfy though!" he reported to the rest of Year Three.

Following our learning about how use cacao beans to make chocolate bars, we headed inside to tour Cadbury World and find out about the history of the factory.

We had to queue to get in, but it was worth the wait! At the desk they gave each and every one of us, FREE CHOCOLATE! Year Three showed great resilience not to start chomping away on their free goodies right away. The staff and adults on the trip found it just as difficult!



Inside the museum, we discovered that chocolate originated from South America and was brought to Europe by the Spanish Conquistadores. We then found out lots more about the Cadbury family, who started from a small shop as Tea Merchants in Birmingham and later built a factory in Bourneville (which we were visiting!). A film with wobbling seats, steam and moving rollers helped us find out more about the making of chocolate in the factory.

We took a tour around the factory with the lovely chocolate smell surrounding us. As lengthy conveyor belts were whizzing and packing thousands of boxes of chocolate bars and giant wrapping machines were humming and clanking, we wound our way up and down and around the factory. A short fun ride later, we arrived at one of the favourite parts of our trip... The Tasting Room!

Year Three neatly lined up, eagerly awaiting their turn as they chose their own concoction of sweets and melted chocolate to slurp and scoff! Miss Stone and Mrs Thomas really liked this part of the trip! As we munched our way through the delectable and sticky cups of chocolate, one of the factory staff demonstrated how chocolate was made and set into shapes.



The original Cadbury family would have done this before the machinery was invented to mass produce the chocolates. It seemed like very hard work and you had to be very precise about matching temperatures, scraping, mixing and setting the chocolate. After watching the demonstration, we had time to look at some of the interactive games and exhibits on chocolate making before heading off for lunch.

We ate lunch outside, next to the factory and then it was time for our 4D cinema experience. Whilst waiting, we played a few games with the staff and then in we went. The chairs were huge and we all wore 3D glasses. The film was great fun and the chairs wobbled and moved! There was lots of laughing and giggling and even screaming as the film was quite exciting.



Once we had finished, we all took turns in visiting the shop and buying a little memento of our trip. Mr Davies made sure he bought the biggest bar of chocolate he could find and the adults were almost as happy to be in the shop as the children!

Laden with goodies from our trip, and lots and lots of new facts about chocolate, we boarded the coach, chatting away about what we had; seen, touched, smelt, tasted and heard about chocolate. We waved goodbye to the factory and made our way back to school, tired but content. "Can we go again next week?" asked some of the children as we boarded the bus... if only we could!

With extra special thanks to Miss Stone, Mrs Thomas, Mrs Anderson, Mr Davies (lunchtime supervisor) and our parent helpers, who helped make the trip as enjoyable as eating a large bar of chocolate!
Mr Davies (Y3 Hedgehogs class teacher).

Miss Aimee Humphreys

Class Teacher—Moles

Year 5 at Aberdovey

DAY 1: Year 5 arrived at Hill West on Monday 30th December feeling excited and exhilarated, yet anxious about the week ahead; what challenges would they face? A final goodbye was said to family and friends and Year 5 were on their way!

It wasn't long before we arrived at the Outward Bound Centre in Aberdovey, after passing through many villages in Wales; it was obvious that there had been lots of rain over the last few days! We were greeted with a smile and were given a tour of the centre. The children loved their rooms and quickly made themselves at home! Their first challenge was making their own beds, which for some, was harder than it looked... doesn't the duvet just jump into the cover?! Children enjoyed the rest of the afternoon exploring and building upon their team identity. For the rest of the week, they would be Team Hilary, Team Shackleton, Team Tenzing and Team Simpson. Dinner on Monday evening one was a choice of pasta, fish fingers or lamb stew...all 3 went down well!



DAY TWO was slightly different for each group, as it would be for the remainder of the week. Many activities were undertaken, one of which was rock climbing. Not only did children have to be brave and think logically about the placement of their hands and feet, but they had to work as a team; each climber relied on the rest of the group to be 'belayers' so that they could complete the climb effectively. The high challenge was particularly rewarding for some of the children, having to climb up to and balance on a small platform, supporting their team mates whilst doing so! Other children walked through a forest area, passing some beautiful waterfalls along the way! The children loved having time in the great outdoors, exploring, questioning and learning. One group had lots of fun gorge walking and completing other water activities. Needless to say they got VERY wet!



DAY THREE Wednesday was a 'big-walk' day for all of the children, with some leaving early to catch a train and not arriving back until later on. Everyone showed real perseverance, commitment to their team, and continued to impress the staff with the positive attitudes through what was pretty wet weather and challenging walking conditions. The children were required to carry their back packs full of essential expedition gear, including their lunch, an extra layer, and cosy gloves and hats! The view of the Blue Lake, the main feature of the walk, was very impressive and was a rewarding sight for the children. In the afternoon, one group were lucky enough to visit a local farm where they found some quartz to take away as a souvenir. The evening's activities were once again a great end to a long but enjoyable day, and included some outdoor games and team activities, including grab-ball!



DAY FOUR Everyone was ready for Day 4... WET DAY! Children were given very specific instructions as to what they needed and followed them extremely well, showing that their listening and organisation skills were on top form. The Outward Bound staff took the group to The Wharf, their water centre; all children (and staff!) were kitted out in specific gear for canoeing. Although the sea looked extremely chilly, everyone was in the mood for a challenge! The children very sensibly carried the equipment they needed to the edge of the water, working as a team to lift at specific times and in different directions. Whilst on the water, the instructors introduced the children to the basic skills needed for canoeing, including rowing technique and turning drills. Fun and lively games were played that certainly rocked the boat; some children had to change places with others that were seated 3 boats away! Dips in the 'clean water' bucket followed for the equipment and participants in order to remove any remaining salt water- I can personally say that ice cold water was a shock to the system! After warming up, the children went back to the centre to tidy their 'cages' (where their equipment was stored for the week). They returned borrowed equipment and left the cages in a suitable state for the next school group. The children should be proud of the independence displayed and responsibility taken during tasks like this.



DAY FIVE At breakfast this morning, the children were filled with mixed emotions. It was their last day of adventure, yet they would soon be seeing their families, whom they had missed very much throughout the week! There were lots of stories to tell! However, before our journey home, children were required to tidy their rooms and pack their cases, ready for a room inspection. The children passed the inspection (after a few re-visits) and were soon ready and waiting in their wet clothes for the final challenge! Back down at The Wharf, children began their final challenge by running around on the beach, warming up. Group-by-group, children then began to walk into the water. They held onto each other tightly for support, and after a 3, 2, 1, children bravely dipped their heads underneath the freezing sea water...what an achievement! Feeling refreshed and accomplished, Year 5 said their goodbyes and began their journey home.

Year 5 displayed many superb qualities throughout the week and all of the staff are very proud of their positive attitudes and excellent team work. We know that they all gained so much from the experience and will treasure the memories that they made on their Outward Bound Adventure.

What the children said:

Rhea - Aberdovey was fun! My favourite thing was the rock climbing! The food was very tasty and I never felt hungry in any of the activities.

Mia - Aberdovey was amazing, I loved the activities!

Lea - Aberdovey was brilliant, especially getting wet! My favourite part was trying out rock climbing (I reached the top!)

Matthew - It was amazing, especially the rock climbing. They feed you really well and you get to roam around the place.

Joe - Aberdovey was a magical experience but hard, too. Our instructor was nice and I would recommend it.



Mrs Hannah Cook

Deputy Head Teacher



Christingle

Ever since I first joined the Hill West team back in 2009, I have always felt that the annual Christingle service held at All Saints Parish Church has been one of the highlights of the festive season. This year was no different. On Wednesday 2nd December (for Mandela and Pankhurst) and Thursday 3rd December (for Barnardo and Gandhi), teachers, children and lots of parents made their way to All Saints church, Christingles in hand.

Then we were treated to a fantastic and truly festive service, led by Mr Lackenby. Lots of our year 6 pupils took centre stage and spoke to us about how Christingle first came about and what it represents. We also enjoyed singing our traditional Christingle hymns and listening to our woodwind and violin players getting us into the Christmas spirit!

We would like to say a special thank you to Reverend Leahy for making us so welcome, to Mr Lackenby for leading our service, to our fantastic readers (Alex Crouch, Louis Fisher, Faith Orimoyegun, Ryan McGuffin, Lewis Durkin, Ollie Lea, Tom Perry, Edward Lealand, Olivia Simmonite, Isabella Jones, Melissa Smith and Olivia Jones) and our wonderful musicians (Amelia Blaine, Annaika Manu, Soraya Shaikh, Olivia Simmonite, Eve Beck, Emily May and Ben Lea). We all went away feeling really Christmassy, and it was great to have so many parents with us too!



Do you know what each part of the Christingle represents?

The **candle** reminds Christians of Jesus who they believe to be the light of the world.

The **red ribbon** goes all round the 'world' and being the colour of blood, reminds Christians that Jesus died.

The **orange** represents the world.

The four **cocktail sticks** represent the four seasons.

The **sweets** (or sometimes dried fruit) remind Christians of God's gifts to the world including kindness and love.



Martial Artists—Black Belts

Mr Stuart Stanway, Tom Perry, Ryan McGuffin and Edward Payne

This year staff and students have been busy training and practicing their skills in the Martial Arts of Karate and Tae Kwon Do. Tom, Ryan and Edward have been training since they were 6 years old and have spent the last year training for their Black Belt in Karate. As well as weekly lessons they have attended special black belt courses every month and had to write a 2000 word project on the Karate style of Wado Ryu. They even had the opportunity to train under Sensei Sakagami Honbucho, one of the original students of the founder of Wado Ryu, Grandmaster Ohtsuka! Tom said “It was hard work because the courses were long and tiring”, Edward said “it was an honour to train under Sensei Sakagami Honbucho and Ryan found the black belt grading “very nerve wracking”.



**Tom Perry, Edward Payne, Ryan McGuffin—Black Belt
1st Dans in Karate Wado Ryu**

Mr Stuart Stanway

On 17th October I travelled to the Tae Kwon Do Bristol Academy, where anyone who is a member of the Tae Kwon Association of Great Britain has to go to prove they are good enough to become a Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do. It takes a minimum of three and a half years to train plus a lot of Integrity, Courtesy, Perseverance, Indomitable Spirit and Self Control which are the 5 tenants by which we stand by. The 5 British masters of Tae Kwon Do watch groups of 12 people take the grading, this consists of answering some Korean questions based around elements of Tae Kwon Do or about the association itself. Line work, where you have to perform a series of moves of defence or attack in a forwards or backwards motion, these are called out at random. 3 patterns (similar to Kata's in Karate), the Masters' choice, your own choice and the one specific to Black Belt which is called Choong Moo, patterns are a series of movements of defence and attack against one or more imaginary opponents. You then are expected to do three or two step sparring or semi free sparring working in pairs, step sparring is a set format of attacks and defence moves followed by a counter attack, semi-free sparring consists of 3 attacks of your choice which must be blocked by your opponent, followed by a counter attack of the opponents choice. Next is one step sparring, a single punch must be defended and counter attacked efficiently and effectively, this is then mirrored by repeating the motion with the opponent using the opposite hand to attack. The final part is three rounds of free sparring against three different opponents. Free sparring is classed as semi contact, we use head, mouth, hand, groin, foot and shin guards to protect against injury, excessive force is not encourage and courtesy towards your opponent must be shown. After a lot of hard work and dedication I have now earned the right to wear a Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do a very special achievement. I have two years now before I can take my next grading, in which time I will be helping lower grades on their way towards reaching their goal of hopefully becoming a black Belt.



Mr Stuart Stanway, Black Belt—Tae Kwon

Miss Rebecca Waldron

Office Manager



On December 11th pupils and staff at Hill West put on their warmest, wackiest and most wonderful festive woollies to raise money for Text Santa Christmas Jumper Day. Pupils and parents kindly donated money on the day and staff donated money instead of sending Christmas cards.

We managed to raise a magnificent £500! It is an amazing amount of money but it wouldn't have happened without your fantastic support and donations.

We would like to say a HUGE thank you for helping to support this event. The money raised will help three charities—Macmillan Cancer Sjuport, Make-A-Wish UK and Save the Children.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs Diane Hardeman who organised this fund raising event but also to wish her the all the very best for her retirement. Mrs Hardeman is leaving us at Christmas after 25 wonderful years. During her time at Hill West as a teaching assistant, Mrs Hardeman has also generously given her time to organising our school fund raising events. She has raised in excess of £6000 which is a magnificent amount and we are all really proud of her.

Over the next couple of pages you will see some great photos of pupils and staff dressed up in their festive jumpers.

Christmas Jumper Day For Text Santa



