



THE HILL WEST HERALD

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Message from the Head Teacher

Christmas, although a joyous time of year, can also be a particularly challenging time of year for many children, including those children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, or an insecure attachment style. Irrespective of whether a child has an additional or identified need parents will know that any change to a child's routine can be disruptive and anxiety provoking. As such, there are some helpful hints below to make the festive season full of love and laughter.



Decorations: When you decorate your house for Christmas it becomes a different house. Try to keep decorations in one room only, so your child can still feel familiar in the rest of the house. Put decorations up gradually whilst your child is around, if possible. If they go to school and come back to a decorated house this may unsettle them.

Christmas Dinner: If your child has strong likes and dislikes don't stress about them sitting down to the same Christmas Dinner as everyone else. Keep to what they are used to and don't try to get them to eat what they wouldn't tolerate during the year. It's only another meal. And it doesn't have to be perfect. Use familiar cutlery, dishes and cups for your child.

Family Visits: If you are visiting family and friends or they are visiting you, try to be definite about times of arrival and departure and schedule this for your child. Have a dedicated room or space where your child can retreat to when things get too much. Have favourite games or toys available in this space and make sure other children or adults do not intrude. Put a sign on the door to highlight it's your child's chill out space.

Christmas Presents: When Christmas presents are exchanged we all expect our children to be polite and show appreciation. If your child is likely to say 'I don't like that, take it back' warn family and friends not to expect too much, how to respond and not to take it personal. Draw up a list of possible presents that family and friends can pick from that relate to your child's special interest.

Santa: We expect a lot from any child to be glad to see a stranger in a red suit, sit on his knee to get their photo taken or know that he will be creeping down the chimney when everyone's asleep. Any other time of the year if a strange person broke into your house in that way you'd be calling the police! Children may worry about this happening. What is important, is that you don't expect your child to make sense of Christmas by themselves. They will need help to remain feeling safe and secure with all the changes that Christmas brings.

Coping with the pressure of Christmas: Be realistic. Preparing for and celebrating Christmas is stressful for everyone. Try to find some time for yourself. Even if it is for a long soak in the bath, or a trip to the hairdressers or watching a DVD. Ask family or friends to help out and give you a break. If you are cooking Christmas dinner and are panicking about how you will manage if your child is not coping, cook the turkey and ham on Christmas Eve and carve it. Pack it in foil with a bit of juice and re-heat thoroughly on the day itself. Prep your vegetables on Christmas Eve. Do anything you can to cut down on the workload. Buy ready prepped vegetables. It's only one day out of the year and the extra expense is worth it if it helps you feel less stressed. Talk to other parents about how they manage Christmas. And remember, keep your sense of humour in close proximity throughout Christmas as it is a time of celebration.

Learning Partnership News

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



Brookvale Primary School gave us a great welcome and were keen to hear what we thought about their school. 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 Teachers and

members of the Governing Body. The two days were thoroughly enjoyable and it was evident that the children at Brookvale 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 the way they were



approaching the teaching of writing, encouraging children to edit and re-draft their work. We were acutely aware of our shared moral purpose and all share in the belief that every child, with love, nurture and an excellent education can succeed.

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 Jon Smart, the Head Teacher at Brookvale and Anna Trigg and Jenny Maskell the Deputy Head Teachers at Brookvale, for the opportunity. We look forward to visiting other partner primaries in the new year; Slade in March and Mere Green in June.

Aberdovey—Year 5

By Dr Rhian Warrack—Year 5 class teacher



Year 5 left Hill West at just after 9a.m. on Monday 31st November on a Welsh coach, headed in the direction of the West coast of Wales. On-board were 48 extremely excited children from Hares and Badgers and 4 adults; Dr Warrack, Miss Robinson, Miss Patter and Mr Scrivens. As school faded into the distance behind us, our attention turned towards the adventures that might await us...

Would we go climbing, canoeing, walking, swimming? No-one was sure, but the excited chatter of children filled the coach as we headed onwards to our destination.

Approximately 4 hours after leaving school, we noticed we were travelling along very winding roads alongside a river, which widened dramatically and the bends in the road allowed occasional tantalising glimpses of a wide expanse of water ahead (which we hoped was the sea and therefore our destination!)

Eventually the coach turned right off the main road, and drove up a steep, curved drive to the Aberdovey Outward Bound Trust Centre. After some complicated parking manoeuvres, we were able to unload the coach and go for some lunch on the front lawn. The view overlooking Aberdovey was simply spectacular.



First port of call for the children, once they had eaten their lunch, was a tour of the facilities in their groups (Shackleton, Simpson, Fiennes and Hilary a chance to choose (and make) their beds. We were staying in two lodges, one for the boys and a separate one for the girls.

The children were taken round the site by their group leaders, who would be with them all week. The children would get to know them exceptionally well over the next five days and they were eager to start their first challenge or activity. Rob and Lotte were head of Hilary, Mike and Ollie worked with Simpsons, Ian and Jo were with Shackleton and Hilary was led by Katie. After settling into their rooms, the children embarked on a range of introductory activities, including 'Jog and Dip' (BRRRRR!!!!), Shoe Golf, team activities, and discussion about what the children would like to achieve over the week and how they could work together to achieve their goals.

By five o'clock, everyone was ready for some food, so we paid our first visit to the canteen area. Frankly, the food was fantastic and there were even second helpings.

After some time to unpack and get some warm clothes the children took part in evening activities, which included setting team rules, exploring the centre in the dark and even playing games. Everyone met up at 8:00 in the Activity Hall to enjoy a well-deserved cup of hot chocolate and a snack and some social time as a whole group, before making their way to their rooms to get ready for bed. 10:30 all was quiet and everyone was fast asleep after an exhilarating first day in Aberdovey.

The following morning everyone met for breakfast in the canteen and enjoyed a delicious breakfast of sausage and eggs, toast, cereal or yoghurt, fuelling up for the day's adventures. As we left the canteen, the sun was rising over the estuary, and the view was simply stunning over Cardigan Bay. What a spectacular backdrop!

The activities on the first day took place in two sessions, one before lunch and one after. These included communicating without speaking, exploring the forest: learning about the plants and animals of the woodland and den building, working together to climb the huge climbing walls using ropes and harnesses, facing fears of height to climb the telegraph pole and jump to catch the trapeze and taking a speedboat ride on Cardigan Bay, before some of the children took the plunge and jumped off the speedboat to swim to the beach! And that was all before dinner!



After a delicious tea, the children had some spare time before meeting up with their teams to take part in more activities before hot chocolate and bed. Some groups were preparing kit for the next day's mountain trekking adventure, some groups took part in team activities, team building and reviewing the days events – thinking about what went well, and what the children could do individually and as a team to improve their team-work, whilst other groups went gorge walking in the pitch-black up a stream bed, using head torches: eventually emerging from the gorge a little wet and muddy, to the spectacular sky emblazoned by the stars of the galaxy above them: we stood and stared in absolute awe and wonder!



As morning broke on day three, the children could be found enjoying another delicious breakfast, enthusiastically chattering about the adventures of the day ahead, whilst one excited and happy young lady, also celebrated her birthday with a present from home. A day of mountain adventures, beach combing, gorge climbing (and sliding down a natural river slide), train rides, raft building and canoeing, racing across Cardigan Bay on a speedboat and swimming to shore, climbing and much, much more, lay ahead for the happy and excited members of Year 5, on another perfect day in Aberdovey. The evening ended with a surprise party for Izzy, with balloons, cake and party games, including some simply superb dancing (Mia L and Rhys were particularly fantastic). At the end of the evening 48 extremely happy, content and tired children made their way back to their beds to get some well-earned sleep for the next day's adventures. Raft building, canoeing, mountain walking and rock climbing adventures lay ahead for our intrepid Year 5 adventurers on Thursday, and many of the children were determined to take every miniscule drop of excitement, adventure and learning from the day's activities, as they had realised - with great sadness - that this would be their last full day in Aberdovey! What a blast they all had!!!

After enjoying a final delicious dinner, the children were able to experience a camp fire – collecting the wood and setting the fire in the dark, on the hillside above the centre. They sat in a circle around the fires and shared stories of their favourite moments with each other, thinking about what they had learnt about themselves, their friends and about working as part of a team. They sang songs, listened to stories and toasted marshmallows with the satisfaction of people who know they have had a great time!

What a simply amazing last evening at Aberdovey!

Everyone went to bed a little sad, as they knew that this was their last night at Aberdovey, but they were also very excited to be returning home the following day.

Friday began with a flurry of activity, as children rushed to eat their final breakfast and find their missing socks, drying clothes and escaped towels! Finally everyone had packed their suitcases, ready for the dreaded room inspection! The competitive edge of Hill West was noticeable as every child harried friends to make sure that their suitcases had been moved to the storage room, that all beds had been stripped of bedding and placed in the laundry chute and that all rooms were neat and tidy. The rooms were immaculate and the group leaders were very pleased.

The final part of their day at Aberdovey involved the children taking part in activities with their group leaders that allowed everyone to demonstrate much they had learnt during their Aberdovey adventure. Some activities that teams had struggled to complete successfully earlier in the week were now completed with ease, as the children’s communication skills, team-work and knowledge of the strengths and skills of each team member had improved so much. The children beamed with pleasure to demonstrate to each other and the staff how much they had learnt. The final part of the morning involved a self-reflection session, where children were asked to think about how they had grown, matured, and developed as people and teams over the week, and some truly insightful and reflective comments were made by all of the children about their journey.

As the children climbed onto the coach – after eating lunch on the lawn where it had all started five days earlier – they were filled with mixed emotions: sadness (to say goodbye to this beautiful place and the people they had met), happiness to be returning home to their loved ones and they were full of pride (of themselves and of their friends) for all that they had achieved!

As the coach pulled away from Aberdovey and everyone waved, “Goodbye!” to the fantastic staff, we all left as better, stronger and wiser people!

Thank you, Aberdovey Outward Bounds Centre!



PTFA Halloween Disco and the ATLP Pumpkin Competition
By Claire Bracher and Rebecca Waldron



This spooky spectacular Halloween Disco was something the children seemed to be really excited about. There were discussions about costumes and who would be wearing the spookiest outfit. The children had already been getting into the Halloween spirit by taking part in the ATLP pumpkin competition.

From vampires to cats, skulls to spiders, pupils embraced the chilling challenge of the ATLP Pumpkin Competition. Dr Beth Clarke said “Pumpkins have take over our school this week—they’re lurking behind desks, in the playground and even in the library—and our pupils are taking great pleasure in scaring the teachers!” Blake Rickwood, age 4, said “I made my pumpkin with Grampy and Daddy, he’s got triangle eyes.” Abi Plimmer, age 10 said, “My pumpkin was black with a skull and crossbones on it. I had to paint it and my dad helped.”



On the night of the PTFA Halloween Disco the Key Stage 1 and nursery children, who I must say looked more cute than scary in their outfits, arrived. When the Key Stage 2 children started to arrive things got scary—they all looked amazingly spooky!

The PTFA work extremely hard to raise funds for our school and this year the Halloween disco event raised **£1279** which is amazing! This funding enables the school to make purchases on the extra items that we need in our school.



Lichfield Cathedral Carol Concert
By Miss Lara Jones—Year Group Lead

There really is nothing that can get you feeling as festive as when you attend the Four Oaks Cluster Carol Concert and this year did not disappoint!

Once a year, children from across Four Oaks gather together, alongside the Four Oaks training choir and cluster choir, Youth Orchestra and Staffordshire Band for a truly magical evening of music making.



The evening began with a beautiful solo from a member of the cluster choir, singing 'Once in Royal David's City' and setting the tone before the choirs and audience all joined, accompanied by the band.

From there, there were a mixture of songs performed by the joint school choirs, training choir and cluster choirs, all of which have been practicing in preparation. The school choirs sang a slow ballad called 'The Colours of Christmas', allowing the audience to reflect on all of the aspects of the season, followed by 'The Christmas Bells'. This was a lively piece that was sung in three parts- a real challenge! The children also sang an arrangement of the pop classic 'Jingle Bell Rock' and you could sense their enjoyment in this.



There were also representatives from each school in the cluster delivering a reading. Summer Clarke (the youngest reader of them all!) read superbly and captured the spirit of Christmas in her reading, leading the way for all of the other schools.

There were also performances from the Cluster Choir and Training choir, again showing the high standards on show in our local area with a range of songs including those in Latin and about being a North Pole Elf!

As well as singing, we were also treated to instrumental music from the youth orchestra, playing their rendition of 'Walking in the Air' and then from the Staffordshire Band, who literally blew us away with 'Christians awake' amongst other pieces.

The evening concluded with a joint item between all ensembles of 'Somewhere in My Memory' from 'Home Alone' and there wasn't a dry eye in the house!

Well done Hill West Choir, you made the school very proud!

Diwali—The story of Rama and Sita

By Dr Rhian Warrack—Year 5 class teacher

Hares and Badgers were delighted to welcome parents and the children of Hill West to attend their Diwali assembly. We all learnt a lot about the cultural celebration of Diwali. The children really enjoyed learning their lines, and practising reciting lines with expression, in character. They all felt that this was much easier to do once they had their costumes on, as it was easier to get into character. They also enjoyed performing for each other as it was great practice with an audience. They were also able to give positive feedback comments to each other as well as give their friends ideas to support them to make improvements.



On performance day, the children did an exceptional job, and everyone agreed that they gave a spectacular performance of Diwali, explaining the significance of the Festival of Lights. It is the story of Ramayana, which is a sacred text dating back 5,000 years, and originates from the ancient land of India. It consists of 24,000 verses and relates how the Hindu festival of Diwali began. It is the story of Rama and Sita; of heroes and villains; of good and evil; of life, love and death.

Ravana was a powerful ten-headed demon king who lived on the island of Lanka. He had fallen in love with a woman called Sita, and had been able to pull and string the bow of her father, which should have won him her hand in marriage, but she refused him, as he was too ugly! Some years later, his sister (Surpanakha) fell in love with Rama (the eldest son of King Dashratha), but unfortunately for Surpanakha, he was already married to Sita.

Surpanakha met Rama in the woods, where he was living with Sita (and Rama's best friend, Lakshman). They had been banished there as a result of a plot by one of Rama's father's wives, Kaikeyi. She wanted her son Bharat to be the next king but she knew that this would never happen whilst Rama was there, so she insisted Rama was sent away for fourteen years. However, Bharat (Kaikeyi's son) was an honorable man. He said he would keep Rama's golden sandals on the throne as a symbol of his power and that he would not sit on the throne, but instead keep it safe until Rama returned.

When Surpanakha approached Rama in the forest and asked him to marry her, he told her that he was already married to Sita. When she insisted, Rama suggested that perhaps she could marry his friend Lakshman, instead.

She grabbed at Lakshman and he cut off her nose with his sword, telling her that he would never marry someone as hideous as her! Surpanakha ran away and told her brother Ravana, the Demon King, what had happened.

He already hated Rama, as Sita married Rama instead of him.



After Lakshman hurt Surpanakha, Ravana devised a plot to steal Sita away. He captured Sita after sending Rama away searching for a Golden deer. He planned to take Sita to his island home and force her to become his wife.

Jatayu, a bird, who had seen Ravana capture Sita, tried to stop him. He was left fatally injured where Sita was captured, and was able to tell Rama what had happened to his wife before he died.



Luckily, Hanuman, the Monkey God, came to help Rama to get his wife back safely as he had heard from the creatures of the forest that he needed help. He offered to go and find where he had hidden her on his island, so they could plan to rescue her.

Hanuman found Sita locked in a tall tower on Ravana's island and told her that Rama had sent him to find her. Hanuman returned to Rama, who was waiting with his monkey army and told him where Ravana had hidden Sita.

Hanuman's monkey army builds a mighty bridge of rocks across the waves to Ravana's island and Rama and his army marched across. Ravana's army was waiting for them.

The two sides fight but eventually Rama, Lakshman, Hanuman and the Monkey army are successful, and finally Rama kills Ravana with his bow and arrow. Hanuman takes the key to the tower from Ravana's belt and finds Sita to let her free.

When Sita saw Rama she ran to him and gave him back their wedding garland and everyone celebrated. Lakshman reminded Rama that as a result of their quest to find and free Sita, fourteen years have passed since they have left home. They realise that now they can go back!

Soon the news spread around the land that Rama and Sita were returning and that the demon Ravana was dead. Everyone came out of their houses to greet them as they returned. As they walked through the darkness people lit divas to light their way. Bharat was still protecting the throne for Rama, and he welcomed them back.

This is why every Diwali, divas and fireworks are lit to remember the journey home of Rama and Sita. Houses are decorated, Rangoli patterns are put outside the house like welcome mats and celebration food is eaten, to remember the time when good overcame evil and light overcame darkness.

The children loved every moment of their performance and were extremely proud of themselves, as were all of the staff and parents. They told the story extremely well, and did a superb job! Thank you to everyone who supported us, including the families who sent in costumes, jewellery and props, as we could not have done such a great job without your support.



The Five Steps of Reasoning

By Sarah Terry—Year Group Lead/Maths

Reasoning is using our mathematical knowledge to explain our ideas. We could write an explanation, draw a diagram or use a calculation to show our ideas. There are five steps to reasoning.

Task:

There are twenty colouring pencils on Nita's table. She is asked to share the pencils between the five children on her table.

Circle the calculation that will give her the answer.

$20 \div 5$ $5 \div 20$ $4 \div 20$ $20 \div 4$



Step one: describing.

I can describe what I have done.

"I divided 20 by 5."



Step two: explaining

I can give reasons for what I have done.

"I divided 20 by 5 because the pencils needed to be shared between the children."

Step three: convincing

I can choose words carefully to give reasons for my ideas.

"It was right to divide 20 by 5 because the pencils needed to be shared between the children."



Step four: justifying

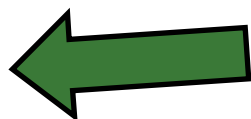
I can give reasons for my ideas in an argument which I am certain is correct. I can use my mathematical ideas to justify my ideas.

"The answer is $20 \div 5$ because the pencils needed to be shared between the children. There were 20 pencils and 5 children to share them between."

Step five: proving

I can give a secure argument that uses mathematical reasons as to why I am correct. It cannot be argued against.

"The answer is $20 \div 5$ because 20 is the larger number and amount of pencils. 5 is the smaller number and the amount of children. We always divide larger numbers by smaller numbers."



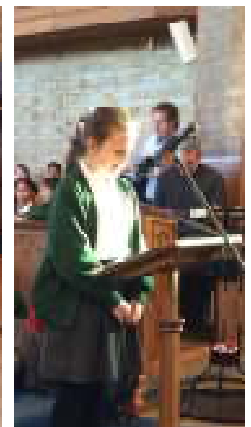
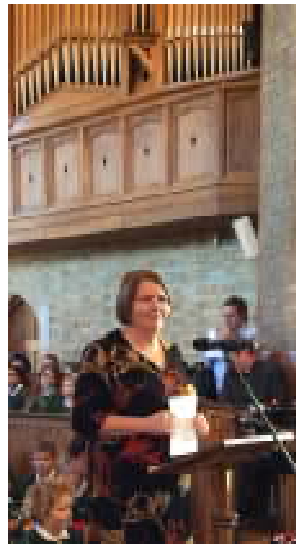
Christingle

By Miss Emily Bolton

Our Christingle services held at All Saints Paris Church are most certainly a highlight of our Christmas season here at Hill West. This year, our service for Barnardo and Ghandi was on Wednesday 30th November and for Mandela and Pankhurst, Thursday 1st December. Our Christingles were well travelled this year as teachers, parents and children walked from Hill West to the Church and the children all took part in a wonderful parade around the Church.

Both the services were fantastic this year, led by Dr Clarke. 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, violin and guitar players getting us into the Christmas spirit!

We would like to say a special thank you to Reverend John Flitcroft for making us so welcome, to Dr Clarke, for leading our service, to our fantastic readers (Olivia Saunders, Maisie Sutton, Matthew Jones, Oliver Swain, Rhea Jack, Lea Pisoni, Heidi Leeson, Jacob Goucher, Molly Thane, Mia Reaney, William Hume and Eleni Miklasz) and our wonderful musicians (Heidi Leeson, Annabel Garbutt, Mante Nausedaite, Tamsin Garbutt, Thea Janjua, Morenike Ogundare, Katie Ford, Dougie Blaine, Emily Peasland, Mya Badesha, Jacob Roberts, Harry lea, William Eustace-Street, Maisie Sutton, Lenon Hart, Zachary Trotter and Alex Heirbaut-Kitteridge). We all went away feeling really Christmassy, and it was great to have so many parents with us too!



Year 2's Nativity

By Mrs Avril Anderson—Teaching Assistant

Wow, what a festive feast for your eyes! Year 2 have put on a spectacular musical nativity for everyone to enjoy. The traditional story line, held together by the narrators, as well as a traditional cast of Mary, Joseph, shepherds, angels, Kings and lots of hilarious animals, all came together to make this a nativity to remember.



The story started off with the animals wondering what on earth was going on in their stable...it seems the Innkeeper's Wife had gone mad. Everything had to be spotless. To add more distress and confusion to the animals, they weren't allowed in the Inn either. Furthermore, EVERY Innkeeper in Bethlehem had the same idea. But why? As the story unfolded, it transpired that Bethlehem were expecting some special visitors...



Filled with the Christmas message, the children have worked really hard over the last few weeks to put together the show.

The children's confidence grew with each rehearsal and the story began to unfold. At their final dress rehearsal the children were ready and raring to go; excited about putting on the show for their parents.

When the performance days finally arrived the children were fantastic. They projected their voices, sang beautifully and acted like they were born for the stage.

The year 2 staff would like to thank everyone who has supported the children in order to bring us all a truly heart-warming experience. We would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Katie Blackwell Joyner thought "working outside on the playground really helped her to project her voice"

Ellie Haywood said she "had gained confidence while acting on stage with her class."

Theo Dawson remarked on the three Kings, saying "they had found something special after a long time of searching"

Amber Prosser enjoyed the performance of the animals and noted "they were very funny"

Re-Opening of the Library on Roald Dahl's 100th Birthday

By Rebecca Waldron—Office Manager

Following the major refurbishment works on the key stage 2 building, pupils celebrated the opening of the new library on 13th September. The grand opening coincided with celebrations for Roald Dahl's 100th birthday and children got into the spirit of the occasion by dressing up as characters from some of his popular stories.



Once the library was declared officially open by Hill West's librarian, Mrs Lampitt, children throughout the school took turns to visit the library and to enjoy some of the amazing books they have there. Jonathan from Year 4 said "It's a great day and really fun, the library is fantastic and an awesome place to visit".

When the reception class visited they learnt all about the special book worm who lives in the library and that he only comes out when the children look after the library really well. Children in year 2 listened to an extract from Roald Dahl's *The Twits* while other children were investigating their favourite stories and exploring some of the sections of the library that have been reserved for some of their favourite authors. Mia in Year 4 stated "I love reading *The Twits* and I like how Roald Dahl uses adjectives and makes words up."



Mrs Lampitt said "Being the librarian at Hill West Primary is such an honour, I love that all the children were excited about our grand re-opening, and hope that it inspires a lifelong passion for books".

All our parents were invited to come and have a look at the new library after school and were able to enjoy this wonderful resource with their children.

Year 6 Takeover Day
By Mr Thomas Smith—Year 6 pupil

The Year 6 children have a day of no school work and instead chose a member of staff they would like to be. This was a fun day, where the children helped to run the school; acting as teachers, teaching assistants, clerical assistants and building site supervisors.



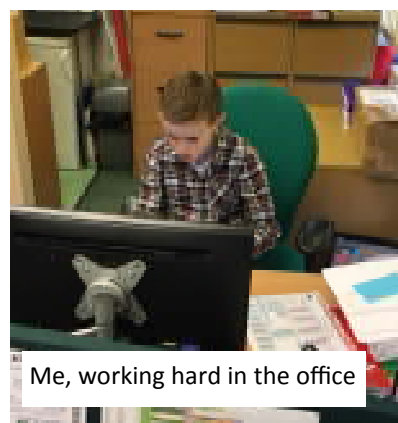
To get the job we wanted we had to write an application letter to say why we would like the job and why we think we would be good at it. Successful applicants received a letter appointing them to their job for the day.

Children shadowed staff in the classrooms and helped in lessons, organised reading books, creating displays of pupils' work. Other children led games at break time and completed lunch registers while pupils in the office sent emails, took telephone calls and typed letters.



Year 6 teacher, Mr Lackenby said "Take Over Day is a wonderful precursor to work experience and we were really proud of the maturity and responsibility the children showed. This is a super way for the children to be really involved in the running of the school and to find out more about what is involved."

I spent the day, answering the phone, scanning documents, filing, typing letters and dealing with visitors to school.



I think that Takeover day is a really good idea because it lets you know what it is like to work for a day. You have to use your initiative and be very responsible. I enjoyed it so much that I didn't want to have to go for lunch, so I ate it as quickly as I could, had a bit of fresh air and then got straight back to work!



Hill West were lucky enough to receive a visit from Google! Google expeditions launched this year, promoting immersive learning experiences, via an app, called “all around the globe”. Each Key Stage 2 class got to try the Google viewer, a cardboard case with a smartphone, and explore places around the world with 360° views. Fortunately only a few of us felt motion sick! We were able to explore the Pyramids of Egypt, the Amazon rainforest, International Space Station and Galapagos Islands. We even had a look inside a human digestive system!

I am sure you will agree, by reading the following comments from the children, that it was a highly entertaining and educationally rewarding activity.



Eva, in Rabbits said "it was cool, we just looked through it and it was random. We didn't know where we were at first."

Jess in squirrels thought "It was great! we learned loads about the digestive system."

Eleni and Jenna in year 6 said "It is fun to see it all but it can also help education and is a big step forward in science and technology."

Zach in year 6 thought "it was awesome!"

Hayden in year 6 said "it was cool because you could explore other places, it was like you were there!"

If you would like to find out more visit <https://www.google.co.uk/edu/expeditions/about>. You can purchase the cardboard surrounds to fit most smart phones for less than £10, and the app is free!



Our First Week At Hill West Primary School **By Lisa Pardo—Assistant Head Teacher**

Wow! What a wonderful start at Hill West!!!

Robins and Wrens had an amazing first week at 'Big school'. They all looked super smart in their new uniforms. Some felt excited, worried, happy but mostly they felt really 'grown up'!

There was lots to learn about in the classroom - Where do we hang our coats? Where shall we sit on the carpet? Can we eat our snacks?

Children listened carefully to instructions, they lined up sensibly in the hall and chose their delicious school lunches.

Playtime was a real adventure - we used the trikes, played on the tyres and made friends.

Art was fun - experimenting with paints and making shapes using bands and pins.

Children enjoyed story time and browsing through books in the book corner.

Well done Wrens and Robins! We have so much to learn and so much fun to have - you are going to have a great time at Hill West!!



We painted pictures of our faces.





I liked learning about sharing.

The Play-doh was fun and squishy.



We met our new teachers.



It was fun playing on the tyres.



I talked to my best friends.

I was a bit scared, then I got used to it and played with all of the toys.



Robins' Class Assembly

By Mrs Joanne Porte—Teaching Assistant

After half term, 4th November 2016 quickly approached, and the stars of Robins were excited to perform to family members and the whole of Key Stage One in their first class assembly about numbers.

Robins enjoy singing and dancing so we performed 'Shake your Sillies out', which was a song full of different forms of movement. The assembly also consisted of one of our favourite songs 'Five Little Monkeys', where the five monkeys, mommy and the doctor acted their roles out brilliantly. In class, we decorated houses and some children told the audience which house number they lived at and how old they are.

Because 'Shake your Sillies out' was such a crowd-pleaser, Dr Clarke encouraged the whole of Key Stage One to join in the song and the actions! Mrs Evans, Mrs Port and Mrs Durkin were very proud of how the Robins spoke in clear, loud voices and their enthusiasm towards performing their first class assembly to their families.

We hope you all enjoyed it.



Bonfire Lunch

By Jane Thompson and Julie Durkin—Teaching Assistants



Remember, remember the 4th November! What a feast we had. Our annual Bonfire Lunch saw the children enjoy lots of yummy treats at lunchtime.

There were hot dogs and chips, chicken curry and rice, jacket potatoes and a vegetarian option. For dessert there was Arctic roll, which

was a real hit. When one child asked us what it was, we explained that Arctic roll was ice cream wrapped in cake. Their reaction was “ice cream and cake together, this is the best day ever!”

The children enjoy many themed lunches throughout the year including; Chinese new year, Valentine’s day, Easter and our next themed lunch will of course be Christmas lunch with all the trimmings.



Themed lunches are also available to children who usually bring a packed lunch. Look out for the emails from school giving the details and if your child is in Key Stage 2 you can make payment on ParentPay.



MacMillan Coffee Morning

By Mr Stuart Lackenby—Assistant Head Teacher

On Friday 27th September, the pupils, parents, families and friends of Hill West took part in the World's Biggest Coffee Morning in support of Macmillan Cancer Care.

Who is Macmillan Cancer Care?

Founded in 1911, by Douglas Macmillan after his father became ill, the Macmillan charity has grown to become the charity it is today, raising hundreds of millions of pounds each year to support those diagnosed with cancer and their families. The money raised through events, such as the Macmillan Coffee Morning, helps to fund critical research into types of cancer and treatments; provide advice and counselling to patients and their families and train the wonderful nurses and home carers, who touch many peoples' lives.



But how did the Macmillan Coffee Morning come about?

The first coffee morning was held in 1990 and, since then, the event has grown and grown, becoming the world's largest, and most successful, coffee morning event. Last year alone, £25 million was raised thanks the British public who hosted a Macmillan coffee morning and since 1990, £138 million has been raised for the charity to date. This year, we really wanted to help make that total even bigger! And so, the pupils of Hill West set out to make our coffee morning the biggest the school had ever seen.

What did we do?

After introducing the event in a 'What's in the news assembly?', I had children coming up to me every minute of the day telling me what type of cakes they would be making; how many they would be making; what colour frosting they would be using; who they would be making them with and, from some children, their stories of how their families had been personally affected by cancer. Knowing how generous our school community is, I knew the event was going to be a success but never could I have imagined what would happen next.



On the morning of the event, we had children - one by one - bringing in their home-baked and home-faked cakes all in support of such a worthy cause. Slowly, the tables in the hall were filled with delicious vanilla sponges with delicate rose motifs, gorgeous ganache filled gateaux, succulent strawberry cheesecakes and enough cupcakes to fill an Olympic size swimming pool. Within the first twenty minutes, the six dining room tables we had put out had been filled and still even more cakes were arriving; a testament to our fantastic parents and families.

With an army of fantastically enthusiastic helpers from years one to six to help with the selling of cakes, we opened our doors to our awaiting crowd. Pouring in one after the other, the event surpassed what we had expected. More than one hundred of our mums, dads, grans and grandads, aunts and uncles and friends came out in support of this wonderful charity. The morning was filled with fun and laughter; our fantastic community catching up over a cup of coffee and one of the mouth-watering, magnificent cakes baked by our generous children.

Then came break time and our children got the opportunity to buy a cake as a special break time treat. Even after having sold more than three hundred cakes to our children and over one hundred to our parents, we still had about two hundred cakes by the end of the day. What were we going to do? Not to worry - our parents showed their true community spirit again and bought even more cakes after school (of course, at a reduced price).

How much did we raise for Macmillan?

After a wonderful turn out by our community, we raised a fantastic...(drum roll, please)... £771.93. All that is left to say is **'THANK YOU!'** Thank you to our wonderful children and families who baked or bought a cake and of course, a special thank you to those in our wider school community who came out in support of Macmillan Cancer Care.

Here's looking forward to next year's event



**A BIG
THANK YOU**

Boldmere Swimming Club

By Damien Batchelor—Year 4 pupil



I am Damien Batchelor and I am in year 4, I swim for Boldmere Swimming Club in the Performance Development Squad and I train three times a week. I do an hour of land training on Saturday morning starting at 9am where I have to work on my stamina and strength, doing a lot of running, sit ups, press ups, skipping and other core strength activities. After my land training I swim for 1.5 hours and do a series of different sets including all four strokes, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and front crawl. I also train on a Monday for 1.5 hours and a Tuesday for an hour and at each session I do a poolside warm up for 15 minutes before I swim.

I have to eat a healthy diet including lots of protein and carbohydrates and I shouldn't eat too much sugar. I need to drink plenty of milk to help my body to recover after my training sessions.

I love swimming and work really hard at each session trying to beat my personal best times in training and at galas. I enter many galas throughout the year, competing



in all four strokes and the individual medally which is a race made up of all the strokes, my favourite stroke is front Crawl or butterfly. I train hard for 52 weeks only missing sessions if I am on holiday.



Recently I entered the Boldmere Club Championships where I was awarded a certificate by Ellie Simmonds the Olympic Gold medallist, for my dedication, hard work, attitude and enthusiasm towards my swimming training and I was really excited as I was on the BBC Midlands today news. It was amazing to meet Ellie and here about her training with Boldmere Swimming Club and she congratulated me on my hard work and told me to keep training really hard and maybe one day I might be in the Olympics!

If your child has been celebrating success in a activity such as sport, music, drama, dance etc, outside of school, please speak to Rebecca Waldron in the school office and we may be able to feature you in the next edition of the Herald.