

THE HILL WEST HERALD


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FOUR OAKS



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Grace (Hares)

Pencil on paper

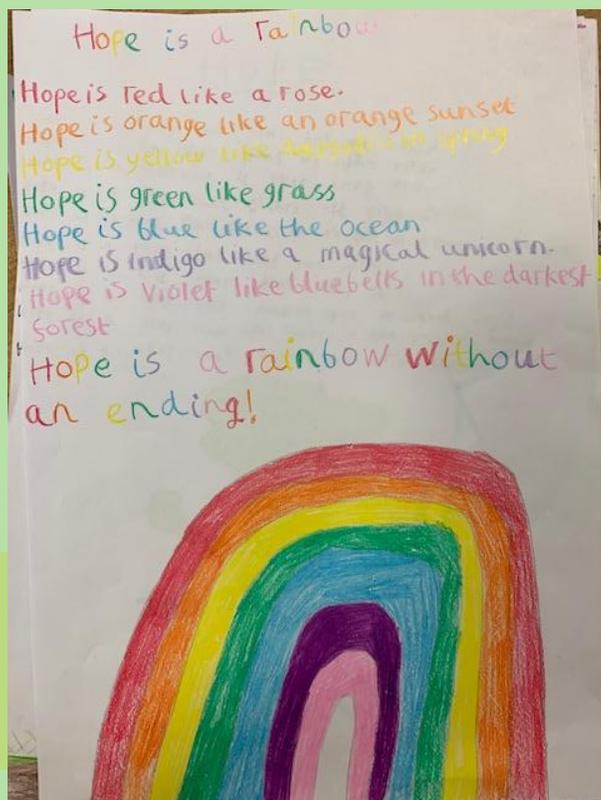
Message from the Head Teacher

By Dr Beth Clarke

In a crisis, as characterised by the last 12 months, the one thing that we all draw upon is hope for a brighter future.

The Four Oaks Cluster of schools which includes Whitehouse Common Primary School, Little Sutton Primary School, Moor Hall Primary School, Coppice Primary School, Mere Green Primary School, Arthur Terry Secondary School, Four Oaks primary school and of course Hill West Primary School have worked collaboratively for many, many years. Although school systems and structures have changed with the introduction of Cooperative Trusts and Academy Trusts the commitment, as a group of Head Teachers, to work together to serve our local community has never diminished and we meet regularly to discuss our collective priorities to support each other and our community. Although we have continued to meet as a group of Head Teachers throughout the pandemic we were sad that the collective coming together or our children had been limited over the last 12 months. We really missed our joint Christmas Carol Concert at Lichfield Cathedral last December.

When we knew that schools would be opening their doors again to all pupils on the 8th March we were determined to embark on a collective venture, something we could involve all of our children in and share with each other. We



Hope is the Thing with Feathers

by Emily Dickinson

*Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all.*

*And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.*

*I've heard it in the chilliest land
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.*



decided that we would ask all of our teachers to plan and deliver a series of poetry lessons, culminating in the children in each of our schools writing a 'Four Oaks Cluster poem of Hope' that not only encouraged our children to focus on the brightness of the future ahead but also to consider how they each impact on their local community and the great influence they can have. Our schools have been sharing the children's poems this week via our individual school twitter feeds and it has been great to read the messages of hope embodied in the prose.

At Hill West we used 'Hope is a thing with Feathers' as our inspiration. Emily Dickinson was born on December 10th, 1830, in Massachusetts. While she was extremely prolific as a poet and regularly enclosed poems in letters to friends, she was not publicly recognized during her lifetime. She died in 1886, and the first volume of her work was published in 1890. Here you can see just a couple of examples of the Hope poems written by children in school. I'm sure you will enjoy reading them as much as I have. They certainly lift the spirits.

HOPE!

Hope is a thing that everyone needs
It gives us great joy and laughter
hope is a thing as strong as metal
Its a thing we have to keep and look after.

Hope is the reason to not give up
and its the reason not to hate.
If you always give up you wont have hope
but one day soon you will, just wait.

Hope is the thing that brightens the world
when there is darkness hope leads the way,
hope is the thing that sings the lovely tune
Its something inside us that never goes away.

Hope perches in our heart and soul,
even when your upset or feeling down
or sitting in a empty alley all alone,
hope will definitely turn your mood right around.

Hope is the ladder that leads to great success
Its the thing that will make you believe in wishes
Its the thing to make you not have stress
hope is something we cant live without.

Hope is the future of our lives
Its the thing that shines light on you
Its the thing that makes you warm inside
If your day is gloomy it will get you through.

Navreet.V

HOPE is a star that guides
you, a star that shines
bright

Hope is a kindly person that
finds you, even in the night!

HOPE is a song, the happiest
sound

Even when you can't find
it, HOPE is always around.

Hope is a beautiful love-letter
carried by a baby robin.

Hope is a butterfly's wings
ruffling the snow.

Hope is a puppy hugging his
tummy rubbed.

Hope is that feeling
when the sun is rising. Hope
is that feeling when the stars
are shining. Hope is that bird
you see flying singing there
happy bird song. Hope is everywhere
even in the darkest of places the
coldest of lands and the saddest
of places and even in you! But you
cant see it you cant hear it but you
can feel it! even if you think you
cant! faith is to come and is to go
and may not come back but hope will never
go and will guide you every second of the way

Hope is watching rainbows and it is light aswell.
Hope is spending time with family and it is about love.
Hope isn't being alone.
Hope isn't angry faces.
By Indi

Arthur Terry Learning Partnership News

By Dr Beth Clarke



Our partnership, which is now made up of 14 schools in Birmingham, North Warwickshire and Staffordshire, will be one of the country's 87 Teaching School Hubs (TSHs). The hubs will be school-led centres of excellence for teacher and leadership training and development, focussing in particular on the Department for Education's (DfE) 'golden thread' of Initial Teacher Training, the Early Career Framework and National Professional Qualifications.

The ATLP was invited by the DfE, along with other high performing schools, rated good or outstanding, to apply to become a teaching school hub.

Richard Gill CBE, CEO of the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership and chair of the Teaching Schools Council, said:

"We are thrilled to have been designated a Teaching School Hub. This successful appointment means that we can continue to provide high quality school to school support, teacher training and the professional development of staff. We look forward to working with schools and partners across the region."

The teaching school hub programme will create a national network of 87 centres of excellence for teacher training and development, replacing the previous network of around 750 teaching schools. Teaching school hubs (TSH) will provide high quality professional development to teachers at all stages of their careers. Teaching school hubs will also promote and deliver other high-quality evidence-based professional development to school leaders and teachers.

"It is important teachers and school leaders feel supported in their career," said school standards minister Nick Gibb. "The hubs will make this substantially easier, with expert practitioners able to give experienced advice to those schools able to benefit from it."

This will allow schools to contact their local TSH and work with them to understand the training, support and ongoing development needs for staff to continue growing as teachers.

The new teaching school hubs will be funded for three years (subject to confirmation) and will be accessible to every school in the country. They will receive an annual grant, subject to conditions, including demonstrating progress against key performance indicators. Each hub will have its own defined area and must serve all schools within it, although this will not prevent hubs from working with schools outside their area.

This is a very exciting development which will build on the work of the Arthur Terry Teaching School, first designated in 2011.

Teaching and Learning in Reception (Spring 2021)

By Mrs Lisa Pardo

On Monday 8th March, we welcomed all of our wonderful children back to school and what a wonderful time we have had in Reception so far this term – it is truly fantastic to be together again. In Reception, we began our first day back with learning based around the inspirational text, 'Wisp'. This thought provoking text provided opportunities for children and teachers to reflect upon, and discuss, the concept of hope. The children then considered what their own hopes and wishes for the future



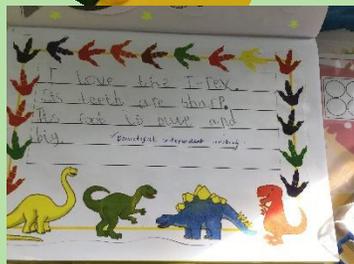
might be before using their Phase 2 and 3 GPC knowledge to produce a short piece of writing which demonstrated their ability to use and apply knowledge of GPCs to spell challenging and unfamiliar words.



Monday 15th was a very exciting day in school....Science day! A range of practical scientific activities were planned to further develop their enquiry based learning skills. We used pens and filter paper to create observe the varying solubility of different inks in water. Resulting the creation of unique and colourful



'planets'. The children also further developed an understanding of which materials are magnetic and which are not. This preceded our 'Space' topic. Children demonstrated their knowledge of Space planet facts which were obtained through research and shared through fact sheets.



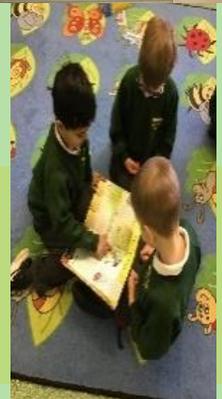
Since the children returned, we have been developing our Communication and Language skills; talking and listening to each other and sharing stories and facts. Children then used and applied their secure tricky word and GPC knowledge to produce extended writing. In number, the children have secured or



understanding of numbers to 15 through concrete and pictorial tasks. During Physical Development the children have focused on ball control, balancing, climbing and landing safely. Most of all, the children have been reunited with their friends. Just look at these smiles!



Our love of books, which continued in lockdown and on our return to the classroom, has developed further through our shared daily reading sessions. The children have been talking to us enthusiastically about the books they have been sharing at home with their families. Our book corner has been popular and children have been observed independently applying their reading skills. As we look to the future, we are excited to share new learning opportunities with the children. We know that they will continue to make outstanding progress through the engaging and exciting topics planned to stretch and challenge our children in the Summer term!



Teaching and Learning in Year 1 (Spring 2021)

By Miss Emily Arkinstall

Over the past few weeks, we have welcomed our wonderful Year 1 children back into the classroom and have been blown away by their resilience, conscientiousness, and passion for learning. The Year 1 team have been thoroughly impressed with how easily the children have settled back into our daily routine and are enjoying us all being back together.



On our first day back, the school united through our love of reading to share our whole-school reading day, focused on the story of 'Wisp – A Story of Hope'. This book highlighted the importance of memories, belonging and dreams. Year 1 started the day by predicting what might happen in the story based on the words and illustrations on the front cover and shared their ideas in groups, listening to one another and taking it in turns to talk. We then moved on to identify key vocabulary and worked together to deconstruct the meaning of key words such as 'scent' and 'blossomed'. The children even created their own Wisp; revisiting memories that made them feel happy, loved, and safe. We thought about our favorite stories and our favorite places to read, linking reading to our Rights Respecting School work and articles 17, 29 and 31 in the UNICEF convention on the Rights of the Child.

Following on from our reading day, Year 1 began investigating the key question, 'What's your favorite Disney film?', learning about Walt Disney and why he is famous. The children completed timelines about his life and compared the differences and similarities between new and old Disney movies. The children loved watching the old Mickey Mouse clips and found them hilarious! In English, the children showcased their best writing, describing their favorite Disney characters. The children talked passionately about the characters they love and constructed sentences using capital letters, full stops, and finger spaces. In Maths, the children revisited their understanding of number in different ways. They completed a treasure hunt around the classroom, using their own boxes, collecting different numbers of objects. They also completed number sequences on snakes using their understanding of the 2 times table and numbers to 30. In Music, the children listened to different Disney songs and identified how the music made them feel, as well as the changes in the music that reflected different moods or characters. The children loved learning about Disney and are now Disney experts!



Teaching and Learning in Year 2 (Spring 2021)

By Mrs Charlotte Massey

2021 hasn't exactly been the year we had all hoped it would be, but we can 'hand-on-heart' say that it will be a year that we will never forget! The Year 2 team have all been amazed by the resilience, strength and humour that the children in Year 2 have demonstrated in order to cope with the exceptional circumstances we have all had to face. We couldn't be more proud of each and every one of you (and parents, we mean you too)! Thank you for being the glue that has held us all together!

Back in the autumn term we stood at the bottom of, what felt like, a huge mountain to climb. Our children had been locked down at home and were then thrust back into school with new teachers and a new year group to acclimatise to. Together we tackled that mountain with enthusiasm and big smiles! Our curriculum enabled us to target individual children's needs, spend time working in small focused groups and the children of Year 2 excelled in the phonics screening check!

At Christmas time, Government regulations still didn't allow us to open up our doors to our wonderful parents, to share with you all the fantastic acting, singing, performing and oration skills of the children in our Nativity performance, but we were not deterred. Oh no! Although a little strange, our brave bunch still put on a fabulous festive show which we were able to record and share, as well as upload live snippets to our Twitter feed. I'm sure you will agree that this was wonderful; the children gave us all a reason to smile that day!

After the Christmas break we received the news we had all been dreading and our classrooms were forced to remain closed. Even though our hearts broke a little, again we would not be defeated. We battled through technical glitches and unstable internet connections and let's be honest, unfamiliar technology, to meet twice a day to share our learning. It was a pleasure to provide our home learning packs, crammed full to bursting with the topics and lessons we would have been covering in class.

Our Neil Armstrong studies stand out to me the most, as each and every one of you explored Armstrong's incredible life, achievements and legacy. We also created our very own Lunar Rovers and wrote biographies. Watching your creations pop up on Twitter was a real treat and one we looked forward to every day. Moving on from Neil Armstrong we began our Africa topic. We maximized the use of the internet, using 'Tinga Tinga



Tales' as a visual stimulus for our writing. The character descriptions and vocabulary choices were brilliant and yet again we were immensely proud of the children's engagement and effort. Linked to the fantastic text, the children looked at and examined African art and craft, including African printing blocks. They explored the use of pattern and colour, investigating the impressionist art of Edward Saidi, focussing on the bright, bold colours and simplistic designs that were all inspired by his African surroundings. In addition, they analysed the meanings behind one of his pieces of work and discussed how Saidi uses bold contrasting colours. The children considered how Saidi uses these in his very distinctive



art to represent animals of Africa. They examined the patterns that African animals have on their coats, looking at colour and shape before producing 3-D printing blocks, which they used to create their own versions of animal print-inspired patterns. After practising printing on paper, the children then produced repeated pattern prints, using one or two contrasting colours.

When we finally heard the amazing news that we could open our doors again we were all ecstatic and a little emotionally raw. Times had been extremely tough but we had survived and every member of staff in Year 2 stood on the doorstep on the first day ready to embrace your return. We had missed you all more than you will ever know! Our main priority in those early days was to ensure that every child felt safe, secure and supported and that the transition back into school was as smooth as possible. In order to ensure that this happened we were able to create fun filled, action packed, off time table days, to shake up the routine and set a tone for our remaining year ahead. Our teaching and learning will support, target and nurture every child, capturing their imagination and reminding them how much fun lessons can be.



We began with a day of reading, focusing on the wonderful story of *The Wisp*. The children explored visualization, retrieval, inference and comprehension skills through fun activities and sharing our beautiful book. Each classroom made their own Wisp character and wrote their hopes and dreams for the future, discussing how they might be able to make those dreams a reality.



Next up was a whole day exclusively dedicated to the Sciences. We were thrilled to explore the processes required to grow strong and healthy plants. Our



children planted seeds into individual compost pots and explored food chains and the impact of changing one element

in the delicate balance of a food chain. We explored fresh produce and the processes involved in providing our supermarkets with healthy, fresh food and ended the day designing and making a home grown in the UK, pizza with a special logo. Lots of fun!



As we break up for the Easter holidays and enjoy a well-deserved rest and recharge our batteries for the Summer term ahead, it is important to recognise how far we have come in such turbulent times. Take stock of the things that truly matter, rest and recuperate, and know that we are all so proud of you. We can't wait to welcome everyone back to school after the break, to enjoy the exciting learning planned for the Summer term.

Teaching and Learning in Year 3 (Spring 2021)

By Ms Kelly Bailey

We are so thrilled to be back together in class! We wasted no time getting straight to work. We have tried hard to keep our curriculum broad by including a range subjects each week and it has been heart-warming hearing the children sing and get creative during Art lessons. The children have spent time studying the 'Pop Art' movement, with great enthusiasm as the use of colours and content captivated them. They were inspired



to create their own 'Pop Art' style pieces and completed an onomatopoeia –based mixed-media project, where they layered bold colours and text over a collaged back ground; Andy Warhol would have been proud! The fabulous artworks are proudly displayed in our classrooms. In History, the children have explored the Ancient Egyptian Era, learning about what life was like for people during this time period, who the Pharaohs were and the impact that key Egyptians such as Tutankhamun

“It was quite interesting how Andy Warhol screen printed his Pop Art, and how he wore wigs to get noticed”

and Cleopatra had on the people of Egypt, and the world. Tutankhamun captured the children’s interest particularly as he was only 9 when he became King, and a God. Engineering techniques such as the use of pulleys



were explored, as children discovered how the Ancient Egyptians built their pyramids, and the children delighted in discovering what a gory mummification is and the part this played in the burial process. The children also developed their

I like finding out stuff! So exploring light has been great”

“ Science has been my favorite bit, learning about shadows is cool”

understanding of the religion and beliefs of the Egyptians and the signs and symbols used in their religion. The children were inspired when learning about the Egyptian language and even wrote their own names in hieroglyphics. This term has also involved a focus on Europe, in geography. The children used atlases to locate European countries, capitals and oceans, relative to other parts of the world. Children then focused on the topography of the United Kingdom, including mountains, hills and rivers, before evaluating why settlements are often located near water sources like rivers. The children then began to explore the climate of regions of the world, and



how the weather is linked to proximity to the equator. The children developed humility as they realised how much damage can be caused by unstoppable forces like hurricanes and tornados. Studying Katrina helped us recognize and use emotive language and how to keep our readers attention. Reading has been a really high priority, especially developing a love of reading, and a personal highlight has been sharing so many fantastic stories with the children. ‘The Wisp’ encouraged us to think deeply about the lives of others, and in ‘The Creakers’ we learnt about differences. ‘Harry Potter and the Philosophers Stone’ taught us about bravery and the value of those around us. The Iron Man taught us how beautiful story telling can be and the importance of descriptive language to help us visualize. We can’t wait to read “The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe” next – as the world of Narnia comes to life!



Teaching and Learning in Year 4 (Spring 2021)

By Mr Steve George



Life in year 4 post-lockdown has certainly been busy – because we've been able to keep pace with the curriculum and there's been no need for catch-up, we have been able to continue with our overarching topic of World War II ; we've studied rationing, D-Day and the Blitz, sheltered under classroom tables and really enjoyed making model Anderson shelters.



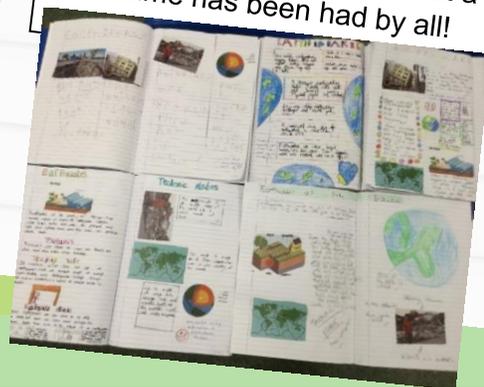
In art, we've tried to emulate the linear, but colourful, work of the (Living) British artist David Hockney and we (almost literally) got our teeth into a celebratory day of science.



In English, we've written metaphor poems and in Geography we've studied the causes and effects of earthquakes.

In PE, we've progressed to competitive hockey matches (without injury!) and we've experimented with ways to reinforce bridges in DT.

All of this can be seen in the photographs that surround this prose – I think you can tell that a good time has been had by all!



Teaching and Learning in Year 5 (Spring 2021)

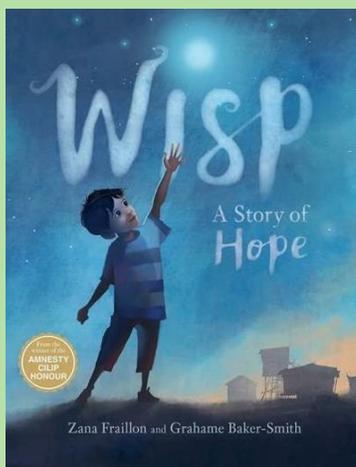
By Joel Holmes

Science Day 2021

For Science Day, Year 5 were tasked with exploring plants. We started the day by exploring how a plant reproduces. We dissected a flower to locate all of its parts and discussed what each part does. We then looked at how seeds were dispersed once they were fertilised. We then looked at the life cycle of a plant from a seedling to a fully flowered plant. We finished the day by discussing how some plants can be cloned using cuttings. We used our own cuttings to plant some clones of spring onions and wrote down the method and prediction for our plants.



WISP – A Story of Hope



In Year 5 we explored the text Wisp – A story of Hope by Zara Fraillon and illustrated by Grahame Baker-Smith. We really enjoyed picking apart the text and making sense of the fascinating story of a refugee boy named Idris. Working in groups, we were able to explore some of the high-level vocabulary and also identify some of the VIP words in a section of the text. We loved the figurative language in the text and identified that the Wisp itself represented ‘Hope’.



In the afternoon, we re-created the different scenes in the text to create an excellent video which captures the journey of Idris and his Wisp. Follow the link in the QR code to see the finished product. (Hares Video will be uploaded to the school’s website soon!)

PE – Rugby with Rugby Dan



The children of Year 5 have been working on their team working skills in rugby with Rugby Dan, we have been playing lots of games which involve communication and tactics. Who knew that learning the game of rugby could be so entertaining and fun! We have been able to get out all afternoon on a Wednesday to learn about rugby which

leaves us shattered at the end of the day. There is no better way to shake off the lockdown blues than by running around and enjoying the warmer weather with our friends!

The Year 5 Team have been so impressed with the commitment and attitudes of our children towards their work, through lockdown and since returning to school. We are so pleased at the progress and hard work of every single child across the year group. We hope that this continues while we welcome all of the excellent opportunities coming our way in the Summer Term!

Teaching and Learning in Year 6 (Spring 2021)

By Chris Ellison

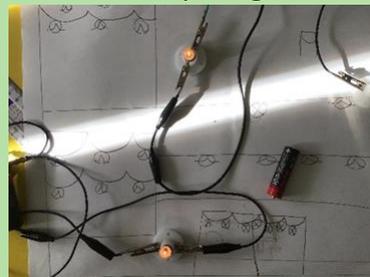
On our return to school, Year 6 have enjoyed immersing themselves in their work and, once again, being surrounded by their friends.



On the first day, Year 6 took part in the school-wide reading day based around the text, 'Wisp: a Story of Hope.' By removing all of the illustrations, they explored the themes of hope and compassion through the life of a refugee in a refugee camp – one into which he was born and has never known the world beyond its boundaries. Based on the work of Tony Whatmuff, the children analysed the text, without the illustrations to identify difference between vocabulary structures and how an author uses specific vocabulary with intent to create an impact on the reader. The children then used role-play techniques to recreate physical illustrations of the story based on their inferred meaning and links to previous learning about the struggles of refugees. Once they returned to class, they participated in discussions about their understanding and the poignancy of the original book and how it links to issues arising around the world.

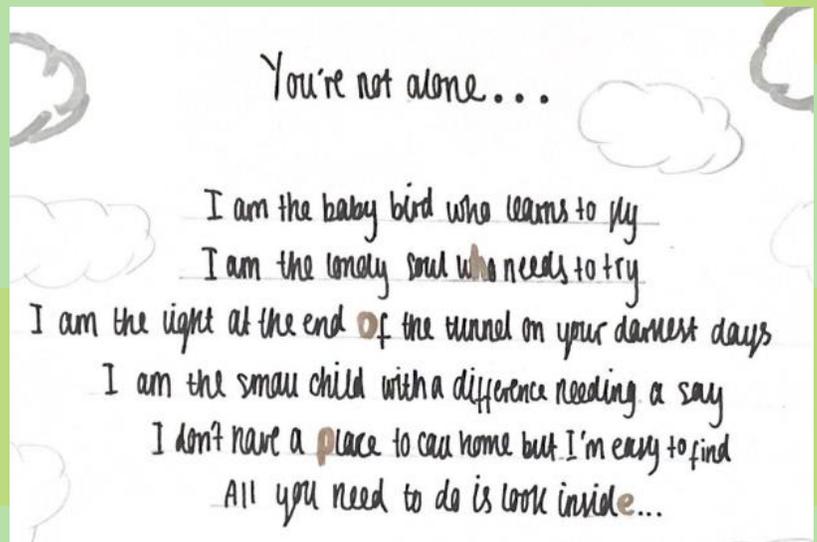


On Science Day, Year 6 explored the circulatory system, including the structure and function of the heart, lungs and blood transport system (capillaries, arteries, arterioles, veins and venules) creating their own factual illustrations depicting how the circulatory system works. They also had chance to revisit their learning about circuits and electricity (which they covered during their lockdown lessons). This was a fantastic opportunity to finally get out the equipment and build a range of circuits – comparing the different types of serial circuits they could construct,

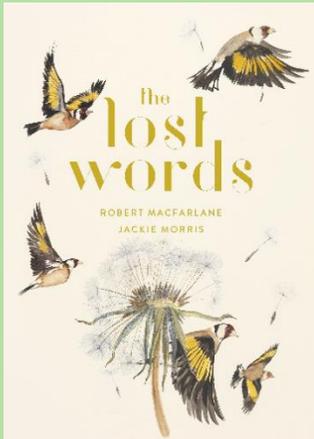


investigating the impact of different components within a circuit and recapping on their knowledge of conductors and insulators. The photograph below demonstrates how the children explored the impact that the number of bulbs within a circuit has on the amount of light emitted by each bulb. Some children also manufactured their own switches within their circuits using a variety of materials, whilst others explored how to construct a fan for their virtual 'restaurant'.

In maths the children explored ratio and proportion, making links between ratios and fractions, utilising their prior knowledge of algebra to support their developing understanding. By the end of this work, children could apply their knowledge to solve problems involving ratio and scale. Children then moved on to further develop their understanding of measures, for example plotting imperial, such as miles, on a graph to convert to metric measures, kilometres. This led to our work on data handling where children read and interpreted continuous data presented on line-graphs, including those where more



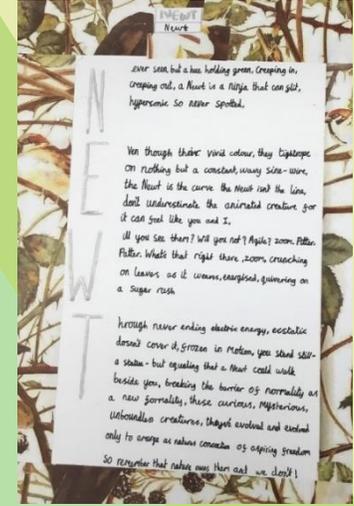
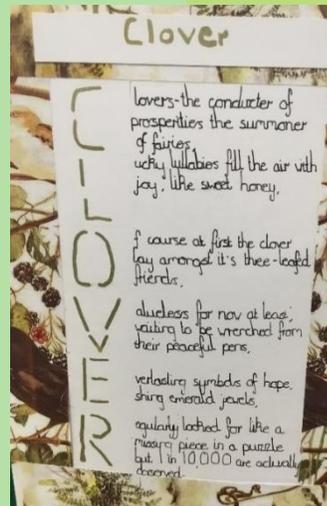
than one set of data was on the same graph. Children then moved on to explore the ways in which data can be presented, including pie charts, learning how they are constructed, applying their remembered knowledge of fractions, percentages and geometry.



In English, one of the most enjoyable experiences so far was when Year 6 had the opportunity to explore the beautiful book, 'The Lost Words', by Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris. This gorgeously illustrated text was created out of the author's passion for the language of children and how the authors feel it is unjust that publishers have taken words from children's dictionaries, so that they are being lost from their spoken language. Lesson by lesson, the children investigated why specific 'natural world' words are being lost from dictionaries and word-hoards of children, such as clover, newt, adder, magpie and fern.

"We've got more than 50% of species in decline. And names, good names, well used, can help us see and they help us care. We find it hard to love what we cannot give a name to. And what we do not love we will not save." Robert Macfarlane.

This text was chosen to develop the children's poetry skills as it is a beautifully illustrated and written book of poems. Each acrostic poem is portrayed as a triptych of images. Each one slowly revealing how the animal or plant would look if that word disappeared from the world of children. The children dissected a different poem each day and analysed its use of imaginative and figurative language. They explored the poetic techniques Robert Macfarlane used, such as paroemion, sibilance and enjambment. Using these techniques they created their own unique poems, mimicking the acrostic style based on one of the Lost Words. It was a great opportunity for the children to manipulate words and figurative language. Children wrote for a specific purpose and audience, selecting language precisely showing good awareness of the reader using the correct form and tone.



In geography we have been learning about the location of different climate zones and how this impacts upon the distribution of biomes (an area of land with a particular climate, type of plants and animals). The children focussed their learning on the key features of different biomes and learnt about the habitats and animals of the savannah, as well as how the geography of the savannah supports the ecosystems that exist within them. Children compared the savannah biome with others (arctic, taiga, tundra, coniferous and tropical) before designing and constructing their own 'biomes in bottles'.



It has been absolutely fabulous to have all of Year 6 back in our classrooms! Miss Lynch and I are immensely proud of how well every single child has managed the challenges of the last year and are delighted to see them thoroughly participating in their school work which will ensure they make the maximal progress in their learning and get the very best they possibly can from their final year at Hill West.

The tradition of Easter Egg Rolling

By Dr Rhian Warrack

In many cultures, the Easter egg is a symbol of new life, fertility and rebirth. It has become one of the most widely recognized Easter symbols, representing the rebirth of Christ as well as the coming of Spring. But the tradition of painting hard-boiled eggs during springtime actually pre-dates Christianity.



Easter Egg rolling is the British tradition of rolling eggs down a grassy hill, a custom which dates back hundreds of years and is said to have originated in Scotland. On Easter Sunday, many Scottish families participated in an egg rolling contest. After they're boiled and painted, the decorated eggs are taken to the park where they are rolled down a hill. The person whose egg rolls the farthest distance without breaking is the winner of the contest.

Although it is generally considered a children's game, egg rolling actually has a religious meaning: the rolling of the eggs down the hill symbolizes the rolling away of the stones on Christ's tomb associated with his resurrection.

It is also a popular tradition in other places in Britain like Preston, in Lancashire, which has a long history of this tradition. The annual Egg Rolling events on Avenham Park involved rolling decorated eggs down grassy hills, known as pace-eggs (a Lancashire-specific custom). Pace-eggs were traditionally decorated by wrapping the eggs in onion skins and boiling them to give the shells a golden, mottled effect. Children would then roll their pace-eggs down the hills and see who could get theirs the furthest without it breaking. More recently children painted their eggs before rolling, although nowadays many just favour rolling an egg of the chocolate variety. Top tip of the day is to wrap your chocolate egg in a sandwich bag first, to preserve the broken chocolate to be eaten later!

There is an old Lancashire legend which dictates that eggshells must be carefully crushed afterwards, otherwise witches will steal them and use them as boats! At Hill West, we have seagulls to do this job for us!

In the United States, Easter is dominated by candy, chocolates and the Easter Bunny. One popular American tradition is the Easter egg hunt. Children of all ages enjoy filling their Easter baskets with chocolate eggs or exchanging the eggs they've found in return for various treats. However another custom is the Easter egg rolling contest. Since 1987, the White House has hosted Easter egg rolling contests for the American public. The eggs are rolled across the South lawn using a stick rather than downhill as they are in Scotland. Previously, an estimated 30,000 people joined the first family on the White House lawn for the traditional Easter egg roll.

Egg Rolling at Hill West

Every year on the last day before the Easter break, the children of Hill West gather on the school hill for our annual egg-rolling competition. To add a new twist to the proceedings this year, we have a huge target painted on the slope, so the challenge was set to see if any of the children could land their egg in the bulls-eye! At the time of going to press, one Year 2 child was successful, with only Year 1 and Year 5 left to go!



This year, children attended the event in their year group bubbles, in line with our COVID risk assessment and we were delighted to welcome, in a socially-distanced way, the Easter Bunny! The Easter Bunny turns out to be an excellent dancer – and was made extremely welcome by the children, who were delighted to see the range of dances in the Easter Bunny’s dance repertoire!

The Easter Bunny was also extremely helpful, as it was on hand to spot the winning egg at the bottom of the Hill West hill on every single throw!



We began our Egg-Rolling at 9am this morning and it has been a real pleasure to see the children shout and cheer on their eggs as they flew, rolled, bounced and ricocheted down the hill. The children lined the slopes to witness their peers' eggs traverse the slope and we have been treated to a magnificent array of fabulously decorated bouncers, flyers and rollers – as caped, decorated and clothed eggs are let loose from the very top of the hill, to begin their fleet descent. Children excitedly watch their super-hero egg sail through the air on the traverse downhill and

they race after, to see which amongst them can grasp the coveted crown as the 'Best (furthest travelled) Egg'.

This is a fantastic Hill West tradition that we are truly delighted the children have all been able to take part in this year - despite the restrictions caused by the times we are currently living in. Once again, our annual egg-rolling competition has brought happiness and joy to all our children!

So we said, "Happy Easter – and may the best egg win!"



A letter to young people from Gavin Williamson MP, Secretary of State for Education



I wanted to let you all know how grateful I am for the way you have responded to the huge challenges you have all faced throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

Whether this is your first year at school or your final year of college, I know the disruption you have all faced to your education since the pandemic began has been incredibly challenging and has meant completely changing the way you learn - either learning remotely at home or continuing at school or college with fewer of your friends around you and lots of safety measures in place.

Whether you were at home or at school, the disruption last term and throughout last year asked a lot of you and your families. I am filled with admiration for the incredible way you all responded and the resilience you have shown. Not being in school or college with your teachers and friends was a huge sacrifice. Everything you did, with the help of your families and your schools and colleges, and everything you missed out on – time in school, taking exams, seeing friends, playing sport and much more - made such a huge difference to helping us stop the spread of the virus. I want to say a huge thank you to all of you.

Getting all young people back into school and college safely has been my priority throughout the pandemic. I know how vital it is not just for your education but also to spend time with your friends and to feel happy and secure. All our lives have changed a lot in the past year but the challenges that young people have faced have been some of the hardest. I will continue doing everything in my power to make sure that all of you are supported to boost any areas of work you've had less time at school to study, get the qualifications you deserve and have the opportunities you need to succeed.

Continuing to follow all the safety measures your schools and colleges have worked hard to put in place, as well as taking a test twice a week, is so important and helps us to stop the virus spreading. The testing that thousands of you have been taking part in at school and college is a vital part of this. I am so grateful to you and all the staff who have supported you to do this. I know your schools and colleges have worked incredibly hard to prepare you to test yourself at home.

As most of you at secondary school and college move to testing yourself regularly at home, it's vital that you continue to test and report online twice a week through the Easter holidays and after you return to school. Home testing twice a week for you and everyone you live with makes a huge difference and means you are playing a really important role in helping us move back to a more normal way of life. Your school or college will continue to support you and make sure you have tests. You and your family can also find out more about home testing [here](#).

I was delighted to see the enthusiasm with which so many of you returned to school at the beginning of March and I am sure you have had a wonderful few weeks catching up with your friends and teachers. It was fantastic to meet pupils delighted to return to school on my visits to schools like Arden Academy and Bedford Free School and to see so many more of your reunions on social media. I hope that the new term will be just as enjoyable and successful for all of you.