

THE HILL WEST HERALD



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theherald@hillwest.bham.sch.uk

ACE; Ambitious, Curious, and Ever-respectful



Message from the Head Teacher

By Dr Beth Clarke

As a primary school Headteacher and an adoptive mum I have been keen to understand, over many years, how best to support children's behaviour in school. There seems to be two very distinct schools of thought reflected in the literature. Some like Bennet (2017), advocate for compliance, the importance of rules and consequences and the ability of teachers to have pupils removed from classes, while others, such as Dix (2017), ask us to consider instead, the root causes of behaviour, with reference to self-regulation, restorative conversations and trauma informed practices. This contradiction is recognised in government policy by Parker and Levinson (2018) where some of the guidance to schools is underpinned by a top-down, behaviourist model of discipline and other guidance acknowledges the emerging emphasis of the role of schools in promoting mental health and wellbeing of pupils (DHSC and DfE, 2017).



In support of the role schools play in promoting mental health and wellbeing, there is a growing body of research advocating that when managing behaviour schools should adopt a relational approach (Golding and Hughes, 2012; Bomber, 2018; 2020; Dix, 2017). Brooks (2021) suggests a 'relational approach' is a way of interacting or communicating with others that embodies core values such as respect, inclusiveness, honesty, compassion, cooperation and humility. As outlined by Humphries (2020), one of the challenges for schools who take seriously the growing crisis in child mental health is how to offer both effective support (or intervention) for children and a consistent environment of warmth, safety, acceptance, hospitality and respect, enabling them to flourish.

Zeedyk (2020) suggested that one of the most important insights we have gained as educators from neuroscience is that brains are shaped by relationships. Human brains are not complete at birth but are designed by evolution to continue developing. They do not simply unfold according to a genetic pattern but are literally shaped by experience. Zeedyk's work (ibid) is supported by the work of Elliot (2021),

“Human brains are not complete, pre-formed, immutable objects. They are incredibly dynamic and adaptive entities that journey with us in our lives, moulding to our needs and shaping our capacity in the world. Our brains do most of this adaptation in response to our environment before birth and in the first few years of life; indeed, they are at their most malleable at this early stage” (Elliot, 2021, p. 21).

We know from brain development studies that synaptic connections are formed when two or more cells in the brain, called neurons, are stimulated at the same time. Brains do not grow by gaining more neurons but by creating connections between neurons called synapses. Every time a baby has a new experience of any kind, the brain creates synapses and since so much in the baby's world is new, the brain is creating synapses at an imaginable rate. Every time an experience is repeated, the synapse linking the relevant neurons is strengthened, through a process called myelination. After enough repetition, the brain has a robust pathway that it will automatically travel when it confronts that situation again.

At Hill West we know that teaching all children to behave in socially acceptable ways is as important as teaching all children to read and we believe our approach to managing and supporting behaviour has to be founded in a relational approach of love and acceptance, ensuring the teaching of love, kindness, patience and compassion for all.

Arthur Terry Learning Partnership News – Time to Say a Fond Farewell

By Dr Beth Clarke

It is with a heavy heart that we are saying goodbye to Mrs Emily Johnston who first joined Hill West in 2015 as a class teacher. Her talent and leadership abilities shone through and she was quickly promoted to Assistant Head Teacher working on our senior leadership team alongside Mrs Nichola Leeson, Mrs Hannah Cook, Mr Lackenby (Day), Mrs Rebecca George, Dr Warrack and myself. She worked tirelessly for the children and families she served and had ambitions of one day being a Head Teacher in her own school. Then as the pandemic hit in March 2020, Mrs Johnston had to isolate as she was expecting her first child. She was blessed with baby Harry in the autumn of 2020 and enjoyed a year's maternity leave. Instead of returning to Hill West after her leave she decided to accept an offer, which had been extended by Mr Day, to work with him at his school in Erdington. She joined the team at Brookvale in September 2021 and made an immediate impact. Whilst there, due to the promotion of the existing Deputy Head Teacher, an opportunity arose for her to apply for the position and I was delighted to hear, earlier this week, she was successfully appointed. Although inevitably saddened by the fact that she won't be returning to Hill West, I am delighted for Mr Day and of course Mrs Johnston and know that, together, they will make a formidable team. One of the many advantages of working within a Multi Academy Trust is that we are often able to retain (not in all cases) the most talented individuals to work across our family of schools. This gives aspiring leaders of the future the knowledge that their skills and abilities will be recognized and opportunities for promotion will exist – beyond those available in any one school.



Research tells us that our county has better Head Teachers than ever before but they seem to be in increasingly short supply. Almost one-third of primary and secondary headships are re-advertised because no suitable candidate comes forward to apply. Nearly a quarter of the existing Head Teachers are aged over 55, and as they retire over the next 5 years, the profession will be further depleted. At the same time, too few new candidates are putting themselves forward for the most senior roles in school. This is not true however of leaders at Hill West who are determined to buck this trend. For me, developing the next generation of serving Head Teachers is an important facet of my role and one which brings me much joy. To know that I, and the wider team at Hill West, have played even a small part in securing the future success of schools beyond our own is truly heartwarming.

‘Successful succession demands that we set aside our yearning for heroic and everlasting leadership and that we treat leadership instead as something that stretches far beyond any one leader’s professional and even physical lifetime’ (Sustainable Leadership 2006, p.93).

At the ATLP we recognize that to foster greater interest in leadership and create a sense of possibility, potential Heads (and other leaders) need to be given opportunities to lead, and at earlier stages in their careers. Being able to try out the leadership role for size – whether on a strategic project or by assuming responsibility for a key area of school activity – will give them a taste of what leadership means in its day-to-day reality. This has certainly been the case for Mrs Johnston and others who have gone before her, namely Mrs Leeson, Mrs Cook and Mr Day.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) learning in Reception

By Mrs Lisa Pardo

Science in Reception is taught through the *Understanding the World* area of learning. Within this there are three sub-sections *Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities* and *The Natural World*. Through carefully planned activities, children are encouraged to observe, predict, problem solve, explore, think and talk about the world around them. We aim to develop curiosity, with children asking those important *How? Why?* and *What if?* Questions, to further embed their knowledge and understanding.

Reception were taught about famous astronauts including Neil Armstrong and Tim Peake. We looked at how things are very different on the moon. Through this we began to explore the force of gravity. Watching clips of astronauts attempting to eat sandwiches on the moon caused some amazement from the children! *'Gravity is a strong force but it is invisible- it pulls objects down'*. Sarvan aged 5.



Children explored the planets and developed a good understanding of what makes each of the planets individual *'Neptune is a blue and gassy planet'* Kit aged 5.



As homework, the children created wonderful planets which now form a spectacular planetarium in our entrance



To extend our vocabulary relating to materials, children sorted items by their properties. We discussed which materials were best to use for different purposes.

It was wonderful; to hear that one of our families had continued learning about Space, with a visit to The National Space Centre.

Whilst learning about the season of Winter, we introduced the process of *Changes of state*. We undertook an ice experiment to see how we could quickly release the penguins from the frozen cubes *'We can put heat on them, like the sun or a hairdryer, we could move the ice cubes around and they will melt more'* Arya aged 4. *'To get water to be ice you get it cold and put it in the freezer'* Rory aged 4.



Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) learning in Year 1

By Mrs Linsie Burton and Mrs Charlotte Massey

In **Science**, we have been submersing ourselves in all things materials. We began our topic distinguishing between objects and the materials they are made from. The children explored the classroom, identifying as many objects as they could made from wood, plastic, metal, or fabric, before naming, sorting and identifying these objects. The children then moved on to further categorise objects by the physical properties of the material they were made of. After mastering properties of materials we began the exciting exploration of magnetic materials. The children began their learning with an intriguing investigation, asking: "How can we remove the paperclips from this glass of water without getting our hands wet?" The children considered many different methods, before discovering that paper clips are magnetic. The children found that some magnets could move them all, but others could not. This led us to wonder what other objects in our classroom might be magnetic. The children found as many different magnetic items as they could and were surprised by some of their findings! They discovered that not all objects made of metal are magnetic. Using this new knowledge, the children then got creative, planning, designing and making their very own magnetic board game. To end our Science this half term, we have revisited our exploration of seasonal changes around us. We have been observing the slow, subtle changes in temperature, the changing appearance of the trees and the colours in the sky, as we have begun the transition from winter into early spring. The children have been asking many questions about the length of the days and nights and are excited by the advent of lighter evenings that they have noticed begin to occur. The children were particularly interested in finding out whether the lighter evenings would alter their current bedtimes!



This half term our computing (**Technology**) topic has been a very exciting one! The children have been given the opportunity to develop their skills in programming, coding and problem solving through the use of floor robots, called Bee-Bots. To begin with, the children talked about what the buttons might do, as each one had a symbol on it instead of a word. Then they explored what happened when they pressed the buttons in a sequence. They investigated how the robot reacted and the directions it moved as a result of different commands. After exploring the possibilities, new vocabulary was introduced and the children were asked to give the robots specific instructions.



Initially, they had to find a pathway on a map, ensuring they crossed specified symbols as they went. It was at this point, that the children also had to begin to use the 'store memory' and the 'clear memory' function buttons on the Bee-Bot. The result of not using these was quite funny! As the children became more confident in moving the robots, they also began to develop their use of directional language to begin to record the pathways. The children then started to create more complex programs for their robots to follow. To end the project this half term, the children were faced with a problem to solve, collaborating with each other to talk through the possible solutions. Each robot had a pathway to follow with different sized obstacles in its way. The children had to work together to move their robot from point A to point B, avoiding the obstacles and then record the commands to create a program. Lots of the robots crashed into their obstacles before a solution to this problem was found.

In DT (**Engineering**), we have been studying boats, linked to our learning about the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). We began by exploring photographs of different types of boats and their functions. We discovered that the materials used to build these boats, and the shapes that were used, varied greatly depending on how fast the boat needed to travel, how many passengers the boat needed to carry and the type of water the boat needed to travel across. The children explored the concepts of floating and sinking and developed their understanding that some materials sink, whilst others float. Some of these discoveries were surprising to the children and led to lots of debate and discussion. They also explored questions such as: ***How can a metal rod sink and a metal boat float? How can a large boat made of heavy materials stay above the water? Why does the type of material impact how fast a boat can travel?***



The children looked at life boats specifically, developing their understanding that the shape helps them to cut through large, heavy waves to get to people more quickly and that the brightly coloured exterior of the boats helps everyone to identify them, even on a stormy day. The children used all of their knowledge to begin to label the features of a life boat, before applying their knowledge to design their own boat. The children will select an appropriate material for their boat, using their scientific knowledge of materials and will use their knowledge of the features of life boats to add on the details needed to create a vehicle suitable for this task and able to carry as many rescued passengers as possible. At the end of this half term, the children will be experimenting with different types of join to try and answer the question: ***Which materials are the most suitable to build a boat that floats on water and how can they strengthen the structure to ensure the boat will perform its required function?***

In **Maths**, the children began this term by exploring place value. They used 100 squares, number lines, cubes, bead strings and base ten to count forwards and backwards, find 1 more and 1 less than any given number up to 100 and to solve missing number puzzles using their knowledge. The children have also been learning how to count forwards and backwards in 10s. When the children had mastered finding 1 more and 1 less, they then moved on to finding 10 more and 10 less than any given 2 digit number. It was important at this point that the children continued to use the base ten and cubes to demonstrate their understanding of the value of each digit. The children began to apply their knowledge of counting to the nearest 10 to estimate amounts. We talked about the difference between a sensible estimate and a guess, and how this can help us to solve problems. Throughout our Maths topics the children continue to develop their reasoning skills. Using their knowledge of place value to answer questions and share their answers with others, using the sentence starters "I agree with that answer because...I don't agree with your answer because...I'd like to add to your answer by..." This way the children are developing their confidence to understand and explain their answers.

This half term the children have also been learning about money. Recognising coins, adding amounts and relating our knowledge of number facts to the concept of money. The children have been finding ways to pay the shop keeper different amounts up to 20p, finding the totals of up to 3 items and beginning to give change. This half term the children have also been securing their knowledge of number bonds, using cubes, part-



whole models and number sentences to represent the different ways to make both numbers. Additionally the children have been recognising that addition can be done in any order. The children have really enjoyed learning about doubling and halving numbers and are beginning to understand that by knowing these facts off by heart we can speed up our timings to answer problems, it also makes it much easier for us! The children have also been comparing 2 digit numbers, using their knowledge of tens and ones to say whether a number is bigger or smaller than another. By using concrete apparatus the children are also able to reason their answers.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) learning in Year 2

By Ms Chloe Davies and Mrs Sarah Terry

It has been an exciting half term in Year 2, as we have explored materials, mechanisms, simple algorithms, fractions, addition, and subtraction strategies, rounding, and 2D and 3D shapes.

In DT, as part of our Neil Armstrong topic, we have been investigating different types of mechanisms, including wheels and axles, levers, and sliders. We were fascinated to see how so many everyday objects work with mechanisms. For instance, we discovered that scissors and seesaws use a lever mechanism. Next time you're at the park, why not check out how the seesaw works? In Year 2, we loved learning how wheels and axles work together to move vehicles. We played with toy cars before making our own simple wheel and axle mechanisms. Soon we will use all our knowledge to create our very own moon buggies!



During our Science lessons, we have investigated and compared various materials and their properties. We began by learning the definition of absorbency before examining different materials such as paper, cleaning cloths, kitchen rolls, and tissue to find out how absorbent they are. We each wrote a hypothesis before carrying out the experiment, predicting which material would be the most and least absorbent. Our hypotheses were confirmed in some cases, but other results surprised us. Miss Davies, Mrs Terry, and Miss Lynch were very pleased that the classroom tables received a thorough wash during the lesson!



The investigation of absorbent materials led us to think about waterproof materials, which are those that do not absorb water. Using this information, we discussed which materials are waterproof and which are not. To test our theories, we carefully dripped water onto different materials using pipettes. We then got to thinking, can you make a non-waterproof material waterproof? The answer, we later discovered, was yes! We used wax crayons to make paper waterproof. We were amazed at how the water created a sort of bubble





on top of the wax and how the wax blocked the water from reaching the paper. Using what we now knew about wax's waterproofing property, we created some fantastic waterproof self-portraits which we



displayed outside. Most recently in Science, we have explored natural and man-made materials. We loved exploring our wonderful school grounds to collect natural materials such as leaves, sticks, pine cones, and stones and comparing their properties to the man-made materials we found in our classroom. Using these materials, we printed repeating patterns onto paper and discussed how the natural materials and man-made materials printed differently.



In computing lessons, we have developed our understanding of instructions in sequences and the use of logical reasoning to predict outcomes. First of all, we gave and followed simple instructions given by our teachers and friends, thinking carefully about the language used to ensure instructions were clear and precise. We thought about clear and precise sequences of instructions in relation to computers and agreed that computers can only follow clear and unambiguous instructions. Next, we got to work programming Bee-Bots. We created different algorithms for a range of sequences using the same commands and explained the importance of the order of commands to achieve a



desired outcome. Initially, we used maps that had been made for us to move our Bee-Bots around but after our understanding of how they worked had developed, we designed and created our own themed maps to use with the Bee-Bots. Our next few weeks will focus mostly on debugging our programs.



We have also been busy in Maths this half term. We turned our classroom into a shop to learn how to round and decide when to round up and when to round down; number lines were particularly useful to help us to see how near or far numbers are to multiples of ten. To support our learning of 2D and 3D shapes and their properties, we learnt the vocabulary vertices, faces and edges. We then applied this knowledge to various activities such as games of 'guess the shape', feely bag games, drawing shapes and labelling shapes. We also took part in shape hunts to see shapes in everyday life and drew shape pictures. Our place value and number bond knowledge were put to the test, when we investigated strategies for solving addition and subtraction calculations. We were able to identify whether an addition or subtraction required us to use our knowledge of place value or number facts to find the answer. Later in this unit, Hamilton Trust's 'Spider and Fly' resource helped us to add and subtract on a 100 square, by partitioning the smallest number and then counting on, or back, in tens and then ones to find our answer. Fractions are no match for the super mathematicians in Year 2! We split shapes into halves, quarters and even thirds and noticed how each section of the shape was equal. We then moved our learning on by writing how much of a particular shape was shaded as a fraction.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) learning in Year 3

By Mrs Ellie Marshall

This half term has been a busy one for the STEM subjects in Year 3. In science, we have been learning all about forces and magnets. We started our learning off by learning about push and pull forces and identifying them in action. To help secure our knowledge, we took lots of objects onto the school field and applied push and pull



forces. We discussed why some objects moved more easily than others, taking into account the terrain of the field, the size of the wheels on some objects and the weight of the objects. Towards the end of our learning on forces, we conducted an experiment about the friction forces generated by movement on different surfaces. The children rolled a ball down a ramp onto different surfaces and measured how far the ball rolled, to determine which surfaces had the most and least friction. We then moved on to learn about magnetism (and magnetic fields) and magnets, and about their north and south poles. The children had fun trying to put similar magnetic poles together and feeling them repel



each other, as well as testing out different objects to see if they were magnetic. We even tested to see if magnets are less powerful in water! We ended this topic with children making their own board game (using magnets) to explore how magnets can be used in the real world.



In Computing, we have been learning about code and programming, using the application 'Scratch'. Each session, we have been building our knowledge to allow us to program sprites (characters) to move, make sounds, change appearance and interact with each other. The children even learned to create a piano! They understand that a program needs to have a start command and that each additional command results in an action being performed.

In DT, we have been learning about pulley systems, looking specifically at

how the Egyptians used pulleys to help them to build the pyramids. Children experimented making a simple pulley and then testing it with different weights.

We kicked off maths this term with some revision of place value and then dove into fractions. We learnt to count up and down in tenths, find fractions of amounts and to order fractions using a fraction wall. We then moved on to learning to tell the time to the nearest 5 minutes on both analogue and digital clocks. We are now ending this half term by learning about place value in money, exploring how multiplying and dividing by 10 and 100 results in the change in place (and therefore in value) of the digits on a place value chart.



Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) learning in Year 4

By Ms Clare Whelan

The children in Year 4 have had such a fabulous term learning about World War II. We started by reading the book FARTHUR, which is set during WWI. The children then wrote their stories but set them in WWII, using descriptive language to write a sequel to the story. They used the five senses and utilised figurative language such as personification, similes and metaphors, along with 'show not tell' sentences to describe the scene. We are certainly seeing some wonderful publishable stories. Now, the children are concentrating on writing a non-chronological report about WWII, thinking about features such as formal tone and technical vocabulary. We have been blown away by the enthusiasm and knowledge expressed by the children who have relished this topic and as a result, have produced writing that has exceeded all expectations.



Maths

This term the children began by exploring 2D and 3D shapes and described their properties using appropriate vocabulary. They have explored finding coordinates on a grid and some children came up with wonderful phrases to help them to recall how to read the axes, such as 'fly before you walk'. Now the children are focussing on comparing decimals and finding equivalent fractions. This is the first time the children have explored negative numbers, but this isn't holding them back as they are impressing us greatly with their mathematical skills. During every lesson, children strive to master the new learning so that they can use and apply their new learning, which has allowed them to

make excellent progress in their learning.



Science

In science this term, the children have explored the topic Animals, including humans. The children have identified different types of teeth and what they are used for, comparing human and animal teeth. They have researched the digestive system and how it works, addressing misconceptions, they have completed class quizzes and used drama to demonstrate how the digestive system works. They have finished this term by exploring food chains and have even looked at classification of humans based on their physical features. They all have a sound knowledge and should be very proud of themselves.

Technology

What an exciting term in technology we have had. This term the children have made their own Podcasts, they chose a topic of their choice and then researched this topic to find as many facts as they could. They then explored the programme 'Audacity' to help them record their Podcast. In the last few weeks the children have made a seismograph which relates to their Geography lessons on earth quakes. The children researched what a seismograph was, designed their device and then made them with materials they bought in from home. The children worked independently and showed great skill. Now, they are very excited to take these home to show their parents.



Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) learning in Year 5

By Mr Adam Henrick and Mrs Alison Downes

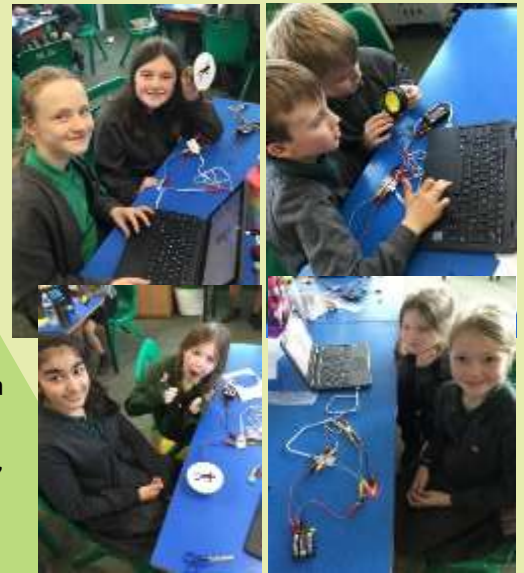
```
program start
do 1 times
  set sparkle 0 to [red]
  wait 1 seconds
  set sparkle 0 to [green]
  wait 1 seconds
  set sparkle 0 to [blue]
  wait 1 seconds
loop
turn sparkle 0 off
```

It has been an exciting half term since Christmas in Year 5 as the children have been pioneers of the 'Crumble' programming system in school. The children have been using physical computing to explore the concept of selection in block-programming through the use of the Crumble programming environment. They have been introduced to a microcontroller (Crumble controller) and have learned how to connect and program it to control a motor and an LED component called 'a Sparkle'.

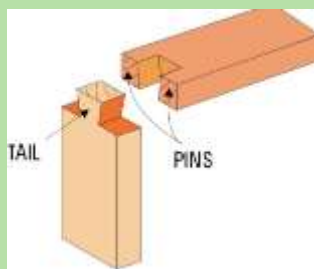
The motor component allowed the children to create a dancing figure with flashing lights – very disco! This will eventually lead to designing and making a working model of a fairground carousel that will demonstrate their understanding of how the microcontroller and its components are connected, and how selection can be used to control the operation of the model.



They have also been introduced to conditions, as a means of controlling the flow of actions in a program and made use of their knowledge of repetition and conditions when introduced to the concept of selection (through the 'if...then...' structure). They have enjoyed exploring the program and writing their own algorithms. The children have been hugely motivated by using programs which control real-world objects and seeing the tangible effects of their programming on screen being carried out on physical items.



In DT, children have been learning how to design and create a dove-tailed joint. The dovetail joint is a method of connecting 2 pieces of wood to make a clean corner without the use of glue or nails.



Children used a template on a piece of cardboard so that they could see clearly how the dove-tail would connect to the pins. They used hacksaws to cut out their pieces from the cardboard whilst learning the appropriate method of using a saw. Children then proceeded to measure their dove-tails into a piece of wood and cut it out. The process was long and required a lot of effort.

However, children learned to appreciate the time and energy spent in creating a tricky design. They followed this by measuring and cutting the dove-tail pins; this was trickier due to the difficulty in cutting horizontally. This has shown the children's patience, perseverance and resilience.



In Science lessons, Year 5 have been off to a music festival, where they have been testing the qualities of materials used there. They started with which material was most suitable as a cooking surface. They had to consider various features: absorbency, strength, ease of cleaning and texture. They spent time choosing materials, devising ways to test the materials and composing their hypotheses. Finally, they conducted their experiments and were interested to see if their initial predictions were correct. They tested plastic bags, wooden logs, aluminium foil, sponge, wire wool, tin, metal spoons, sandpaper and bubble wrap. In general, aluminium was decided to be the best of the chosen materials. When determining the best material for insulating materials they found that thick wool and the aluminium foil insulated well.

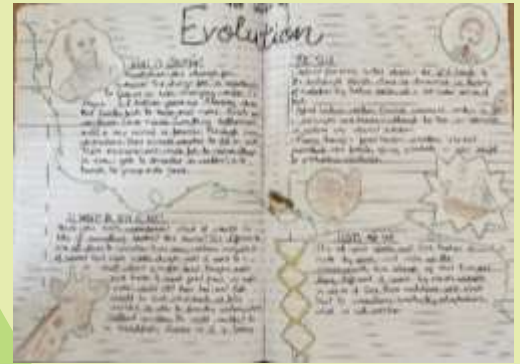
This kept food and drink at the desired temperature longer than any of the other tested materials. Other experiments have included testing the strength and durability of paper products and investigating the sound proofing qualities of different materials. Throughout the testing process, the children have been recording their observations in tables, carefully reading the results and drawing conclusions from it. They have proved themselves to be excellent scientists with their testing rigour, estimates and deductions.



Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) learning in Year 6

By Mr Chris Ellison

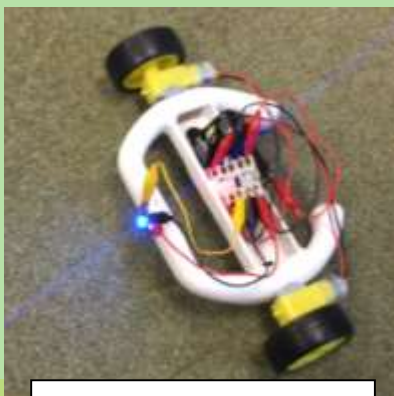
This term, in Science, Year 6 have been learning about the theory of evolution. In lessons they have investigated how random changes in characteristics lead to an advantage in an organism and how the survival of these organisms leads to evolution. By using the ideas proposed by naturalists Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace about natural selection, children learnt how subtle variations and adaptations have led to the wonderfully diverse and complex flora and fauna that have inhabited our planet over millions of years. They learnt about Mary Anning's story and how the plethora of fossils she



uncovered over her lifetime

led to further evidence for evolution. Lessons covered the processes that are involved in creating a fossil and how we can use the earth's natural layers to help date fossils that are millions of years old. Also, importantly, how they show us about changes in species over time. After this, children delved into the more modern science of genetics, learning about how our genes carry the DNA and information that determines our traits which are passed on by – or inherited from – our parents. From their learning, the children produced an informative and engaging non-chronological report that included information linking to the key areas covered.

In Computing this term, Year 6 are thoroughly enjoying their coding unit which explores the concept of variables in programming through games in Scratch. First, children learnt what variables are, and related them to real-world examples of values that can be set and changed. They then used variables to create a simulation of a scoreboard.



Robot by Sam Roberts

After their initial tinkering, Year 6 experimented with variables in an existing project, modified them, and then created their own project. Children used a range of programming knowledge to help achieve their ambitious goals: using count-controlled and infinite repetition loops and variables to create timers; conditionals and condition-controlled loops to create environment sensors and command triggers for interactive game elements; and selection, which implemented if...then... statements, to control the flow of actions their algorithms. Code Club also got to use the Crumble kits to control motors and create small robots from materials in the classroom.



Modeshift Stars and Walk to School Wednesdays

By Miss Sophie Beardmore



Modeshift STARS is a supported scheme by the Department for Transport in delivering Effective Travel Plans; supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable and active travel within education and the wider community. Over the past few month Dr Warrack, the Rights Respecting School Steering Group and myself have been looking at one of the six aims that Modeshift STARS is encouraging people to improve, within education and the community, which is 'improving air quality'; by reducing the number of vehicles and congestion around sites to improve the quality of air locally.

In November we conducted some research through the 'Rights Respecting School Steering Group Travel Questionnaire', which was used to gather pupil and parent views on how children travel to school. It looked at how they travel to school during the week, and asked if they don't usually travel by bicycle, scooter or on foot, was there anything that we could do at school to encourage this? We also asked if you wanted to tell us anything further regarding travel to school. Here are some of your views....

"There needs to be a safe area for children to cross the road. Either a lollipop person or zebra crossing."

"Encourage the children to walk! Then in turn they can encourage their parents."

"If car parking was banned within 1/4 mile of the school it might encourage more to walk and make it safer for children."

"Make parents more aware of the cycle shelter facility and that despite its location it is for both key stages to use."

"A reward system for those that walk they can earn a badge or something just to say we'll done for their carbon footprint."

We would like to introduce you to...

WALK TO SCHOOL WEDNESDAY

Walk to School Wednesday will be a school scheme used to incentivise children to walk to school at least once a week, on a Wednesday. Research conducted in 2015 (DfT, 2015) found that the amount of children walking to school had dropped by 26% from 1975. The Department for Transport have set a target research 55% by 2025 in increasing the amount of children walking to school.



DID YOU KNOW?

74%

Estimate of primary school children who walked to school in 1975-76.

48%

Of children aged 5 to 10 who walked to school in 2015.

55%

Government objective of children aged 5 to 10 walking to school by 2025.

The children will receive an additional 5 house points, which contributes to 'TEAM TIME' on a Friday, and a 'Walk to School' certificate if they do so every Wednesday over the half term. If you could tweet your walk on the school twitter feed, @hillwestprimary and #walktoschoolwednesday we will be able to see your efforts. Even if you park a little further away from the school gates, see the map on the right for guidance, this will count towards Walk to School Wednesday. It will increase the amount of

children walking to school which intern is increasing their exercise amount and reducing the gas emissions committed by vehicles every day.



Rights Respecting School Steering Group and the Hill West Climate Change Charter

By Dr Rhian Warrack and members of the RRS Steering Group

As many of you will recall, the Rights Respecting School Out-Right campaign for the past two years has been focused on children having their say about climate change, and the impact climate change has on children's ability to receive their rights.

The children at Hill West Primary School are passionate about protecting the environment, whether that is at home, at school, in their local communities, nationally, or globally! Children feel so strongly that they have taken action, either as part of the Rights Respecting Steering Group, as a community within our school, or as individuals or groups. There are many examples, from children making posters to encourage children to walk to school to reduce pollution caused by vehicles on the roads, to children collecting litter dropped by others, to children campaigning against the excessive use of plastics (which are so harmful to the environment and to the living creatures sustained by these), to children writing to Boris Johnson (our Prime Minister) to entreat him to take action on their behalf to halt or reduce climate change, before it is too late.

Even though the 2021-2022 Out-Right Campaign is focusing attention on the Mental Health and Well-being of children (after two years of COVID restrictions and lockdowns), The Rights Respecting School Steering Group have not lost sight of the issue of climate change. On behalf of the children of Hill West, they continued a discussion about how we can all take some action to have a positive impact on climate change, and explored why climate change is such a global (as well as a local) issue.

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. These shifts may be natural, such as through variations in the solar cycle. But since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas.

Burning fossil fuels generates greenhouse gas emissions that act like a blanket wrapped around the Earth, trapping the sun's heat and raising temperatures. Examples of greenhouse gas emissions that are causing climate change include carbon dioxide and methane. These come from using gasoline for driving a car or coal for heating a building, for example. Clearing land and forests can also release carbon dioxide. Landfills for garbage are a major source of methane emissions. Energy, industry, transport, buildings, agriculture and land use are among the main emitters.

The Rights Respecting School Steering Group planned and delivered an assembly this half term to all of the children at Hill West to explain to them what we know about the greenhouse gas emissions that are linked to rising global temperatures. They shared with the children the following information:

WHAT IS CARBON DIOXIDE?

Carbon dioxide is a colourless and odourless gas. Carbon dioxide makes up less than 1% of the atmosphere; however, it is an important greenhouse gas.

- This means that its molecules in the atmosphere absorb radiation, keeping the Earth warmer than it would otherwise be.
- For the past 100 or so years, carbon dioxide has been added to the atmosphere more quickly than it is removed. The extra carbon dioxide contributes towards global warming.
- Global warming leads to climate change, including more frequent droughts and stronger storms.
- The heat that carbon dioxide traps also melts ice and destroys Arctic and Antarctic animals' natural habitats.



Why is there CO₂ in the atmosphere?

- The amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is maintained through a balance.

- Processes that **increase** the amount of CO₂ in the air include:
 - combustion of petrol and diesel in cars.
 - respiration of living things.
- Processes that **decrease** the amount of CO₂ in the air include:
 - photosynthesis by plants which converts carbon dioxide and water to make their own food, glucose
 - dissolving in sea water

WHAT IS METHANE?

Methane is a greenhouse gas. Cows and other farm animals produce methane, and so does landfill waste. Methane also escapes into the air when coal, oil and natural gas are extracted from the Earth. Humans put more and more methane into the air every year. This is not good news for climate change: methane is a greenhouse gas, so we need to put less of it into the air to slow down global warming.



WHAT IS YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT?

A carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gases (including carbon dioxide and methane) that are generated by the actions of all living things that respire (like humans and insects or cows and bacteria) or objects made by humans that omit carbon dioxide (such as power stations, cars and houses). Your carbon footprint is how much carbon dioxide you contribute to the world.

The RRS Steering group have developed the Hill West Climate Change charter. This sets out the four areas that we will focus on as individuals, as a school, and we hope, as a Community, to reduce our collective carbon footprint, and thereby reduce our contribution to climate change. The RRS Steering group would be delighted if you will join us and take action, to leave a better world for our children and the generations of living beings that will follow them.



Climate Change Charter

ACE: Ambitious, Curious, Ever-Respectful



At Hill West, it is our ambition to be a carbon-neutral school and community, to ensure that we do not contribute negatively towards climate change. We, as a school, commit to taking action in the following areas:

POWER

To reduce our consumption of power at school and at home by...

- Turning off lights when not needed
- Turning off electrical items (e.g. Whiteboards, computers, monitors, phone chargers) when not needed
- Using renewable sources of energy wherever possible e.g. air source/ground source heat pumps, solar panels, wind-generation
- Using energy efficient appliances

This will reduce carbon dioxide emissions

TRANSPORT

To reduce our use of fuels which contribute to global warming at school and at home by ...

- Walking
- Cycling
- Scootering
- Parking and walking
- Car-sharing
- Train/bus/tram instead of car

This will reduce carbon dioxide emissions

PROTECTION OF HABITATS AND ENVIRONMENT

To maintain or enhance the removal of carbon dioxide from the environment at school and at home by...

- Ensuring that if plants die or need to be removed from their current location, they are replaced by a similar or increased number of other plants
- Turn off taps when water is not being used
- Placing litter in bins or pockets (if none available)
- Reduce, reuse or recycle
- Planting new plants pro-actively, or protecting existing plants, that provide food and shelter for other creatures

This will increase carbon dioxide absorption and produce more oxygen, reducing climate change.

CAMPAIGNING FOR CHANGE

To ensure that action is taken to reduce the impact of climate change on the world climate and our environment by...

- Speaking out whenever possible at school, at home and in the local community
- Taking action against climate change
- Writing to local politicians or national politicians to let them know our views
- Talking to members of the Rights Respecting Steering Group to let them know our thoughts and feelings about climate change and its impact on us

This will encourage adults to take action against climate change and protect the world for future generations

Reading

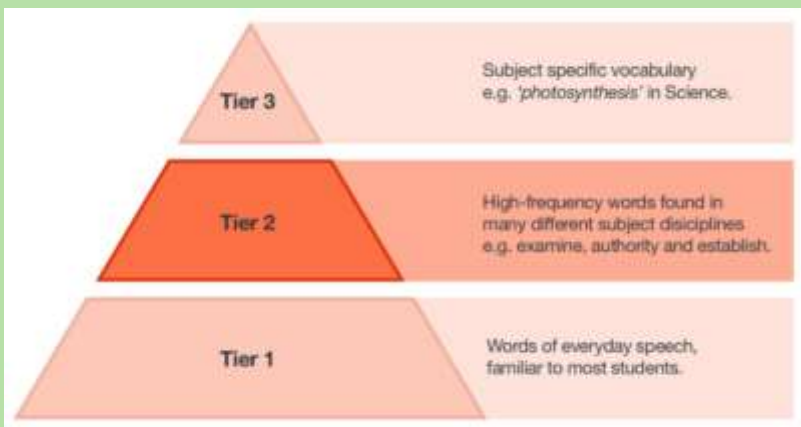
By Mrs Jaimey Thomas

Poet of the week

Since the start of the Spring Term, I have enjoyed delivering a poetry-based assembly each Monday to the children from Years 1 – 6. Each week, I have chosen a poet of the week and shared a range of their poetry with the children. The children have been so engaged within these assemblies and have particularly enjoyed joining in with performance poems such as 'a little bit of food' by Joseph Coelho and 'Rocket' by Kate Wakeling. The objective of these assemblies is to widen the childrens' exposure to a range of poetry. Following the introduction of these assemblies, it has been fantastic to see many children borrowing poetry books from the library, writing their own poems and completing their challenge of reading more poems from the poet of the week's repertoire. I look forward to continuing to share a wide range of poets over the course of the year enabling the children to identify and be able to discuss the types of poems/poets that they enjoy.

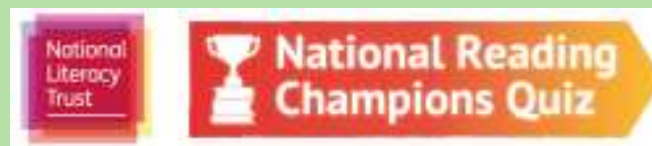


Word of the Week



At Hill West, we know the impact that a child's vocabulary has on their academic success in later life. Limited vocabulary is a barrier to many children in the UK, meaning that they are unable to access age-appropriate content which in turn discourages them to read. On top of our extensive vocabulary curriculum at school (including a weekly vocabulary deconstruction lesson and the teaching and modelling of Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 words) we have introduced a KS1 and KS2 'word of the week'. The word of the week is a Tier 2

word that the children are introduced to. They are taught definitions, synonyms and examples of using this word in-context. The children are also encouraged to use this word within their writing.



On the 8th March 2022, a small team of Year six children are competing in a National Reading Quiz (aimed at 10-14 year olds) competing with other primary and secondary schools in the region. Our Reading Champions team have been preparing for the event by spending time in the library and quizzing each other on the key plots, characters and author names of a range of fiction texts. We have several practice sessions scheduled before the quiz date, which will enable the team to practice working collaboratively and within the 30 second time restraints given for each question. I am so proud of our Reading Champions who show such passion towards reading – they are fantastic role-models and positive promote the importance of reading throughout the school. We look forward to sharing our results with you on the 8th March!

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

By Mrs Rebecca George

Since returning to work full-time, after many years of working part-time (10 plus!), my role of Assistant Head Teacher for Phase One (Reception and Year One) has expanded to include SENDCo (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator) following Mrs Hannah Cook's successful appointment as Head Teacher at Bentley Heath. Initially I was a little apprehensive for many reasons, including following in the footsteps of the outstanding Mrs Cook alongside understanding many processes and acronyms, as well as wondering where I would find the time for all of the paperwork! However, although I have only taken on this role since January 2022, over-seeing this role whilst Mrs Cook was on maternity leave gave me the opportunity to learn a vast amount and work closely with our outside agencies who have been, and continue to be, very supportive. Although this learning is currently through experience, I am looking forward to studying for the National Award in Special Educational Needs Coordination (NASENCo) in September 2022, which a newly appointed SENDCo must achieve by the time they have been in post for three years.

What is the 'SEND Code of Practice'?

The SEND Code of Practice is statutory guidance for organisations that work with and support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. It sets out duties, policies and procedures which must be carried out.

The SENCo award is a yearly programme, with ten face-to-face study days at the University of Birmingham and three assignments. This course, which is quality assured by the Provider Partnership will provide me with further theoretical underpinning and understanding of evidence and research to enable reflectiveness and effectiveness, supporting me to continue to provide the best outcomes for the children and young people we work with.

What are some of the Key responsibilities of a SENDCo?

What is a SENDCO?

The acronym 'SENDCO' stands for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator. This is a mandatory strategic role within a school. The SENDCO is the individual with overall responsibility for ensuring the coordination of provision for all learners with SEN within the school is undertaken.

The SENDCo normally has a strategic role within the school, working collaboratively with classroom teachers, school leaders, external agencies such as Educational Psychologists and health and social care colleagues, and of course, the pupil's parents. The SENDCo will be the key point of contact for all those involved.

The SENDCo must also assess, manage, and advise on changes to the School's SEN budget and provision of SEN resources to ensure that the needs of those pupils with SEN are effectively met.

The role is reliant upon strong communication - a SENDCO will have to provide advice, guidance, training, action plans, and resources to teachers and teaching assistants in order to help their SEN pupils achieve their full potential across the four broad areas of need; **communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social, emotional and mental health and sensory and/or physical needs.**

Day-to-day

The SENDCOs day-to-day practice includes responsibilities including progress monitoring and review, class room observations, regular feedback and written reports with important updates. The SENDCo should be able to put

into practice the “assess-plan-do-review approach” that is required by the SEN Code of Practice to monitor a pupils progress. They may also be responsible for administering the various assessments, tools and methods that are necessary as part of this approach, such as completing questionnaires, analysis of the data etc.

What challenges do SENDCOs face in their role?

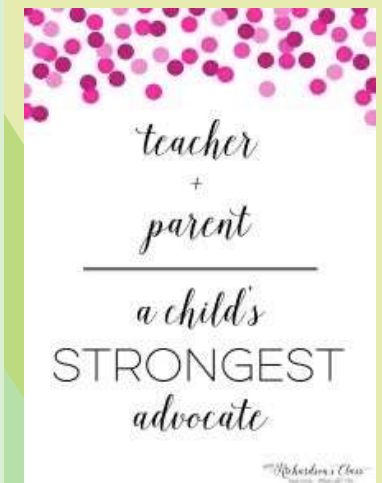
Many would argue that the biggest challenge is meeting the diverse range of special educational needs, under a constrained budget where limited resources are available.

The administrative or bureaucratic element can be personally challenging, with ongoing assessment, stringent record keeping, completing forms, writing regular reports and liaising with outside agencies. On top of that, the continued strategic overview, professional development and leading inclusive values and practice can make this a demanding role.

Balancing all of these responsibilities is a big ask, but it truly does come with great reward for the most proactive of SENDCOs, who have the opportunity to promote inclusive practice and directly impact the educational welfare of the students who need it most.

Who is the SENDCO to the parents?

Parents play a key role in their children’s education and will want to maintain a regular dialogue with their child’s class teacher, expressing any concerns if they believe something is holding their child back. High quality, inclusive teaching remains the remit of the class teacher, who remains responsible for the child’s overall progress. The SENDCOs role is to support and advise the class teacher in their important role – all teachers are teachers of pupils with special educational needs.



The key areas of leadership in SEND:

- The IDENTIFICATION of children with special educational needs in the school
- TRACKING and MONITORING the progress of children with SEND
- Ensuring there is HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND INTERVENTION for children with SEND
- Developing the SEND PROVISION in the school further

What should I expect from my SENDCO?

You should expect honesty and a commitment to working in partnership with you to provide the best service possible for your child. You should expect the SENDCO to ensure that any plans or provision agreed for your child are carried out by the school.

What I have learnt (so far!)

Don't try to do everything at once Step back and take an overview. Decide on your priorities. Make a timeline and take action step by step.

Don't try to do it all by yourself Delegate to colleagues – but make sure you explain clearly what they need to do. Ask therapists and advisory teachers for advice. Network with other SENDCOs

Communicate Listening as well as expressing yourself

Learn Take up training opportunities when you can. Reflect on your own practice. Ask yourself, “What works well – and why?” See what works for others. Listen to parents – you can learn a lot from them.

Strong Parent Partnership

Parents know their children better than we as teachers ever will, so communicating with parents effectively is vital in order to get the full picture of a child. Since taking on this role, I have already had the privilege of working with many wonderful families, as well as liaising with teachers and a wide range of external agencies. I am trying hard to continue to build effective relationships with parents, involving them in steps I am taking and explaining why, and supporting or liaising with them, depending on what they and their children say they need.



What do I do if I'm concerned about my child?

SEND is defined as any education or training provision which is additional to or different from that generally made for others in main stream schools

