



HILL WEST
Primary

FOUR OAKS

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ACE: Ambitious, Curious, and Ever-respectful

Message from the Head Teacher

By Dr Beth Clarke

Although we would all like to think that we live in a world that protects children from harm research has shown that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are more common than we might expect. Not only that, but they have a significant impact on a student's life outcomes. ACEs are traumatic experiences in a child's past that can affect their developing brains and nervous system.



The result can also affect a pupil's behaviour in school – impacting on their ability to manage their emotions, interact socially, delay gratification, engage with school routines or expectations, or form trusting relationships. They can feel under constant threat, living in a permanent state of 'fight or flight'. Pupils who have experienced early trauma can present classroom behaviours that are similar to those more often associated with autism, ADHD or other medical conditions, but require different support strategies to succeed. It is important to remember though that not all pupils who have experienced one of the ACEs will automatically go on to experience these difficulties. It simply increases the likelihood they will.

According to research by the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) in America, there are 10 specific ACEs that have been linked to poor long-term outcomes. If a pupil experiences one or more of these events, it's important we consider developmental trauma as a possible cause for their behaviour. Those who have experienced four or more are likely to benefit from considerable support.

1. Has experienced parental separation or divorce, or the death of a parent
2. A family member has been affected by mental illness, depression or has attempted suicide
3. A family member has hit, punched, kicked or threatened to physically hurt the child
4. A family member has had a problem drinking alcohol or using drugs (including prescription drugs)
5. A close relative has been sent to prison
6. A family member has regularly sworn at, insulted or verbally abused the child
7. In some way, the child's emotional needs were not met for a time
8. Domestic violence has been present in the family (not necessarily directed at the child)
9. In some way, the child's physical needs (clothing, food, shelter, cleanliness) were not met for a time.
10. The child has been sexually abused in some way.

Experiencing trauma early in life can affect a child's emotional and social development. Unless it's addressed, the impact of trauma can be life-long, even affecting the child's health outcomes in adulthood. A trauma is a lasting emotional response to an event that over-whelmed the child's ability to cope with it. Pupils with trauma can experience 'toxic shame' – meaning they believe they are bad or unlovable. This can make it difficult for them to accept blame, make mistakes, engage in restorative conversations or accept praise. They may not be able to articulate this belief.

Every pupil who has experienced trauma is different. However, for many, the path to success lies in building up a trusting relationship with one key adult over time, through non-threatening, structured activities and interactions. It is also important to remember that children who have experienced trauma can live in loving, supporting homes underpinned by nurture.

Arthur Terry Learning Partnership News

By Dr Beth Clarke

The 1st April 2023 marked the 10th anniversary of our school formally joining the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership multi-academy trust. To commemorate this significant milestone some of our pupils (ACE Champions) joined together with some of the pupils from Mere Green Primary School, who also joined the Trust at the same time, to commemorate and celebrate our collegiate working. Together our pupils listened attentively to why being part of a learning family is so important and then celebrated with a selection of 'old fashioned' party games and the eating of cake.

Back in 2012 Ms Anna Balson, then Head Teacher at Mere Green Primary, (now Primary Director of Education for our Trust) and I decided to approach Mr Christopher Stone, the Head Teacher at Arthur Terry School to discuss the possibility of both of our schools joining the then federated Arthur Terry School and Stockland Green School as part of their multi-academy trust. He warmly welcomed us and since those early days the Trust has grown significantly and now serves school leaders, teachers, administrative workers, pupils and parents across three local authorities and 20 schools.

Mr Richard Gill our CEO, reminds us through our strategic plan that we all remain committed to the vision of 'one trust' where all ATLP colleagues can identify with, and realise, the benefits of working in an ATLP school and where we truly do live and espouse a culture of one learning family; where we all have a responsibility for all of our children through our actions, our values and our working practice. One vision; one family; one trust.

Although geographically separated, we are joined together by our collective vision and our values ensuring that, at all times, children are at the heart of everything we do. By working effectively and collaboratively, together we are stronger and our schools are able to thrive.



I am immensely proud to be Head Teacher at Hill West and immensely proud to be part of the ATLP family. To be contributing to the education and life chances (even in the smallest of ways) of children in our other schools fills me with enormous pride.

There are great things on the horizon at Hill West too with future celebrations in the planning to mark the start and end of our school new build! More details on this will follow in coming weeks.

Year 1 Class Assembly

By Miss Emily Arkinstall

It has been an exciting term in Year 1 as the children prepared for their first ever class assembly!

There were funky dance moves, loud chanting and some wonderful singing in an action packed retell of the story 'Mixed: an inspirational story about colour'. In preparation for their assembly, the children learnt the story through role play, sequencing, and inference in our English lessons. The children were split into different colours for the assembly: The reds were the loudest; the yellows were the brightest; and the blues were the coolest! The children loved chanting their colour's chant, especially the reds! They then began to learn their lines for homework, as well as regular practice in school. In rehearsals, the children loved practising the songs and accompanying dance moves!

Another aspect of the assembly involved the children painting their very own self-portraits and writing a sentence describing what makes them unique. They would then read these out during the performance.

After weeks of hard work and commitment, the day of the assembly had finally arrived! The children were so excited to perform their masterpiece to their parents and friends. Some children said they had butterflies in their tummies as they were feeling a little bit nervous before the start of the show. However, they stood tall and proud and delivered their lines with beautiful diction and confidence. Everyone was blown away with their performance and couldn't believe the children were only in Year One! Parents commented on how much they enjoyed the show and the special meaning of being unique and showing kindness to everyone, even if they are different to you. After the performance the children were feeling ecstatic! They felt so proud that they had overcome their fears and impressed the Hill West community.

Well done Year 1 – you made your families, teachers, and yourselves very proud!

What did Year 1 think of their performance?

'I feel so proud and happy!' *Arabella*

'I am so proud of myself!' *Maya*

'I had so much fun. I loved being a yellow.' *William*

'It was so good! My favourite part was when all the colours mixed.' *Aaryan*

'I loved mixing and when all the colours were happy in the end.' *Rory*

'I had stage fright before the show, but I had lots of fun in the end.' *Bambi*

'I was so excited that my Mummy and Daddy were going to see me perform. My favourite song was Being a Friend.' *Bradley*



Science Week

By Mrs Linsie Burton

Science week this year took place from 10th to 19th March. As we celebrate togetherness after a period where isolation was a sad but necessary reality, 'Connections' is an apt theme for British Science Week 2023.

Nearly all innovations in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths are built on connections between people; two (or more) heads are better than one, after all! But as well as exploring the importance and joy in connections between individual scientists, research groups and institutions, we discovered the different ways connections appear across all areas of science. Evolution, for example, shows us the ways that animals, including humans, plants and bacteria are all connected in a family tree stretching back millennia.

At Hill West, we looked at different aspects of science linked to our wonderful progressive curriculum. Each year group had the opportunity to take part in a live lesson set up by the NFU: Year 1 and 2 had the question 'How are tractors linked to space?'; Year 3 and 4 were asked 'How are pigs connected to jumbo jets'; and Year 5 and 6's question was 'How are sheep connected to seaweed?'

This year's lessons took our learners on an adventure from the very bottom of the sea, all the way to outer space to explore those three puzzling questions which explored the British Science Week 2023 theme of 'Connections'.

Many of our children also conducted many of their own experiments at home, which all our staff were really excited to learn about. Many of these were shown on our Twitter feed. Some children sent in video or even brought in equipment to complete these experiments for all their peers to see. It was fantastic to witness the enthusiasm from the children during the week. Our children clearly have a love of science and enjoy researching new ideas. Many of these activities and investigations have made a lasting impression on our children, embedding valuable and specific science concepts into their learning.



Science Week – Lily Amos

Experiment 1 – Lava Lamp

We filled a jug with water and dropped oil and food colouring in. It made a pretty swirling effect!



Experiment 2 – Rainbow Skittles

We laid skittles around the edge of a bowl and then poured hot water into it. The colours all blended into a rainbow!



What did our children think of Science Week?

"I loved our live lesson all about tractors, we learnt about the materials they are made from."

"I really enjoyed the experiment I did at home and showing all my friends the video of what I did."

"We had so much fun making our seismometers and trying to make them move."



PIC COLLEGE

Year 6 Visit to ATLP Careers Fair

By Mr Chris Ellison

On Tuesday 28th February, the Foxes and Otters attended the Arthur Terry Careers Fair 2023. The fair boasted nearly 90 exhibiting organisations: including Aston University and University of Birmingham; Aston University Engineering Academy and Walsall College; sport and football academies; national, local and regional employers such as National Rail, DHL, and Jet 2; healthcare, armed and emergency services; and other organisations like RSPB.

Children were able to gain valuable insights into various careers and industries. The fair provided the children with a chance to engage in interactive activities, ask questions and gather information from the professionals present at the event – also to bag some amazing goodies. The presence of universities and colleges was particularly beneficial for Year 6 students as it gave them an opportunity to explore the different options available to them beyond their primary education. They were able to learn about the courses and opportunities offered by these institutions and gather information that could help them in their future academic pursuits.

They explored the different industries and career paths available to them. Conversations with employers from various sectors allowed the students to learn about the skills and qualifications required for different jobs and how they could pursue their passions and interests in their future careers.

The organisers provided an informative and inspiring experience for the children and we thanked the visiting professionals for volunteering their time to help guide and inspire the next generation.

One of the children from Foxes class shared her thoughts on the event. She said, "I really appreciated learning about the different colleges and universities, and it has helped me think about what I want to do in the future. I also liked learning about the different jobs and industries and how they might link to things I enjoy doing."

Another child from Otters class added, "The event was really informative, and I learned a lot about different careers. I particularly enjoyed learning about the different skills and qualifications needed for different jobs and how to get into universities."

The Arthur Terry Careers Fair 2023 was an excellent opportunity for our Year 6 students to gain valuable insights into various careers and industries. We can't wait for next year's exhibition.



Hill West Netball Team

By Miss Sophie Beardmore

Hill West officially has a Netball Team!!

Let's do a little quiz to see how much you know about netball...

How many players are there on a team?

Can you name some or all of the positions on a netball court?

Is it a contact or non-contact sport?

A netball team comprises of 7 positions; Goal Shooter, Goal Attack, Wing Attack, Centre, Wing Defence, Goal Defence and Goal Keeper. Generally considered to be a non-contact sport, netball has developed into a 'fair contact sport' meaning simultaneous contact is allowed. Its popularity has risen since 2018 when, in a nail biting final against Australia, the England Roses won their first Commonwealth Gold Medal. Fran Connolly, Chief Executive Officer of England Netball, said: "The statistics show that elite success really does drive participation. 2018 is a year that stands out in our memories because of the moment the Vitality Roses clinched the title in the Gold Coast. We have seen a huge surge in interest since that tournament with international media exposure, new investment and partnerships, and an increase in participants across our variety of programmes."

At Hill West, we are lucky enough to have some fantastic players from either an out-of-school club or our after school Netball Club. Hayley from Sutton Town Netball Coach, coaches the girls on a Friday after school and has seen real development in the girls since the beginning of this academic year. During the Spring Term, we have taken part in several matches against other incredible teams from Sutton Coldfield and we are currently competing in a Year 5/6 Netball Tournament at Birmingham Met College.

Here is what we have played so far:

Saint Josephs – 1 vs Hill West - 12

Four Oaks – 20 vs Hill West - 5

Little Sutton – 9 vs Hill West – 7

The girls have consistently demonstrated amazing teamwork and communication skills, as well as brilliant shooting and interceptions. During the first half term, the Year 5 team took part in a Netball Tournament at Nechells Wellbeing Centre in Birmingham. As well as playing matches against other Sutton schools, the girls had the opportunity to work with young aspiring coaches from Sutton College on different skills; defence, centre court and shooting.

A big thank you goes to Mrs Lampitt who found some very smart Hill West Netball Team jumpers for our girls to wear and Mr Holmes for driving the minibus to the events. If you are interested in attending the after school Netball club on Friday with Hayley, please contact me on s.beardmore@hillwest.bham.sch.uk.



World Book Day

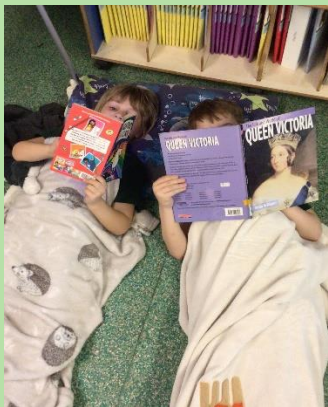
By Mrs Kerry-Lynn Lampitt



World Book Day is an annual event that takes place on the first Thursday of March every year, to celebrate the joy of reading and promote literacy around the world. It was established by UNESCO in 1995 and has since become an important event in the global calendar for promoting reading and literacy. It is particularly important to celebrate World Book Day in schools as it encourages children to develop a love of reading. This can have a positive impact on how children develop empathy, improve their vocabulary and expand their knowledge of the world around them. These are all fundamental skills, along with developing critical thinking skills, that will serve them well throughout their lives.



On Thursday 3rd March, World Book Day, we celebrated and encouraged our love of reading by holding our annual sponsored reading event in school. Children from reception to Year six read throughout the day, accumulating between them 12,600 minutes (10 hours and 24 minutes!) of reading: Reception 20 minutes; Year one and Year two- 25 minutes; Year three and Year four- 30 minutes; Year five and Year six- 40 minutes. Each year group settled themselves down with a blanket or pillow; this allowed them to be comfortable during the reading challenge. A huge thank you to all of our sponsors, as we have raised a huge £1,062.35.



A book fair was organised at school, to provide students with access to a wide range of books giving them an insight into the current works of famous authors. The books on offer were carefully selected for their ability to create a window into different cultures, perspectives, and experiences, giving our children at Hill West a greater understanding and appreciation of the world around them. This ensures that we help foster a lifelong love of reading and learning within our community. For every book sold at the fair, a new book will be purchased for our school library.

To also celebrate world book day, across school a homework of 'Reading spoons' was set. These were a fun and creative way to celebrate reading and encourage children to read more. Children used a wealth of imagination and creativity, making reading spoons that were as unique and special as the books they accompanied. There was so many wonderful reading spoons that I could not choose a winner, so decided to give all of the children across school a Hill West Primary School book mark to thank them all for taking part. Elsie and Erin in Reception had great fun creating their reading spoon characters.



School of Rock at Arthur Terry

By Mrs Alison Downes

On Tuesday 7th March, years 5 and 6 were very excited to attend the matinee performance of School of Rock at Arthur Terry School.

After an early lunch, we walked the short distance to the local secondary school and were seated in their main hall. It all looked very exciting and professional. The stage was created on several levels giving plenty of scope for scene changes and movement. Year 5 were particularly interested in the set design as they have been studying the use of staging in their DT lessons in preparation for designing their own sets for 'The Highwayman'. A bedroom, a bar and a school room could be seen on stage – how would they all come together in the story?

Warming up as we came in was the house band, complete with keyboards, drums, guitars and various other percussion instruments. As the auditorium filled with other local primary schools, the anticipation of the performance grew.

Finally, the curtain lifted and we were transported into the world of failing guitarist Dewey Finn, who in desperation to pay his rent, impersonates his flat mate Ned Schneebly as substitute teacher. On his first day at the school, Dewey, who does not know how to spell "Schneebly", adopts the name "Mr. S" and spends the day behaving erratically, much to the students' confusion! He soon sees the musical talents of his class and prepares them for the upcoming rock contest 'Battle of the Bands'. The project takes over normal lessons, but helps the students to embrace their talents and overcome their insecurities, as well as realising that rock and roll can help them stand up for themselves. Although ultimately they do not win the competition, there are many positive outcomes of the experience.

As an audience, we were impressed by the professional level of acting, singing and organisation. It was lovely to see some ex-pupils from Hill West in the cast too. The actors were superb and gave really impressive performances. They depicted their characters well; scripts had been learned thoroughly; lines were delivered convincingly; and the songs were sung confidently – even though it must have been nerve-wracking delivering the solo pieces.

The production had clearly taken much practice and perseverance, but was a real success and enjoyed by all who went. It was certainly an aspirational experience for our pupils, especially the thespians amongst them. What a treat!



Easter Celebrations at Hill West

By Mrs Alison Downes

Easter at Hill West is always a busy and egg-citing time.

The week began with the delightful Reception Easter bonnet parade where the children could proudly show off their creations. Afterwards, they had the pleasure of experiencing their very first festival school dinners with our Easter lunch.



We were delighted to welcome Sharon and Sally from All Saints Church in to remind us of the Easter story with a drama involving the donkey from the Nativity story. We all sang along to 'Be bold, be strong' and reflected on the meaning of Easter.

Thursday opened with the traditional annual egg rolling event. Children streamed carefully into school on the last morning with a host of variously brightly coloured eggs. There were cartoon characters, colourful patterns and simple monochrome designs – but all had one destiny – to be hurled down the Hill west field bank. Throughout the morning classes streamed onto the field wondering if their egg could make it down the hill intact.

The last day of term hosts a highlight of the Hill West calendar – the Easter Egg Hunt. One of the loveliest sights in the school year is watching the KS1-and KS2-partnered children running off onto the school field to hunt down the hidden eggs. The children ran in all directions. One egg was even hidden on Miss Anderson's back! Much fun was had by all before we all set of on our Easter holidays.



Goodbye from Mrs. Thomas

By Mrs. Jaimey Thomas



After a wonderful 10 years at Hill West, it is time for me to say a tearful goodbye as my family and I are relocating to Sydney, Australia in April.

Being part of the Hill West team has been a life-changing experience. It has been an honour and a privilege to work with such a determined, hard-working team and I have met so many wonderful people along the journey. Hill West has provided me with so many happy memories and plays a huge part in who I am today. It has been an honour to work alongside such talented and ambitious colleagues, to work with the most remarkable children and with truly fantastic parents.

The support that I have received throughout my time here has been immeasurable, which has helped me to develop into an ambitious leader. I aspire now to take everything that I have learnt from Dr Clarke and the Hill West family into the education sector in Australia. Hill West has taught me that relationships come above everything, and that when you truly love the children they can reach for the stars and succeed.

