

THE HILL WEST HERALD



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ACE; Ambitious, Curious, and Ever-respectful

Message from the Head Teacher

By Dr Beth Clarke

We were delighted to hear, just before the half term break, that after a rigorous submission, our school was designated, yet again, with the Primary Science Quality Mark.

Close to 200 Primary Science Quality Marks were awarded to infant, junior, primary, middle and special schools in May 2023 to celebrate those schools commitment to excellence in science teaching and learning.

So far, since its national launch in 2010, over 5000 schools across the UK have achieved a prestigious Primary Science Quality Mark.

Primary Science Quality Mark is a school improvement programme for primary science, which provides professional development for new and experienced subject leaders each year. PSQM enables confident, knowledgeable, reflective leadership, which results in an improvement in the way in which science is planned and taught in school. Miss Lynch, our Year 2 class teacher, ably supported by Mrs Burton, our Year 1 class teacher have led science successfully across school, so much so, their work has been nationally recognised and I would like to offer them my heartfelt congratulations to them both on this achievement.

The Primary Science Quality Mark is led by the University of Hertfordshire in collaboration with the Primary Science Teaching Trust. Associate Professor Jane Turner, PSQM National Director said:

“There was never a more important time for primary children to have a high-quality science education. The coronavirus pandemic and climate change crisis have made everyone aware of the importance of science in our world. Primary schools have an important role to ensure that children understand how science works and keeps us and our planet healthy and safe. Schools that have achieved a Primary Science Quality Mark have demonstrated a significant commitment to science teaching and learning. The profile and quality of science in each awarded school is very high. Children are engaging with great science both in and outside the classroom, developing positive attitudes towards science as well as secure scientific understanding and skills. Science subject leaders, their colleagues, head teachers, children, parents and governors should be very proud.”

Science is an important part of our curriculum at Hill West. In our school we strive to ensure...

‘A high-quality science education provides the foundations for understanding the world through the specific disciplines of biology, chemistry and physics. Science has changed our lives and is vital to the world’s future prosperity, and all pupils should be taught essential aspects of the knowledge, methods, processes and uses of science. Through building up a body of key foundational knowledge and concepts, pupils should be encouraged to recognise the power of rational explanation and develop a sense of excitement and curiosity about natural phenomena. They should be encouraged to understand how science can be used to explain what is occurring, predict how things will behave, and analyse causes.’ National Curriculum in England: science programmes of study, Department for Education, 2013.



Arthur Terry Learning Partnership News

John Willmott School

Royal approval for John Willmott project as VIPs visit.

The ongoing rebirth of John Willmott School received Royal approval last week, when His Majesty the King's representative visited to meet staff and pupils and hear about future plans.

Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands, Jenny Loynton, said she had been 'hugely impressed' after her visit to the school, which is part of our family of schools (ATLP).

During the visit, on Thursday May 11th, Mrs Loynton heard about plans to rename John Willmott the 'Royal Sutton School', as well as the impressive system of 'Moral Virtues' which are helping to transform the culture of the school in Reddicap Heath Road. Sutton Reddicap councillor Richard Parkin also joined the visit, meeting students who were about to head out into the local area to take part in a litter pick – one of the many community activities being developed at the school.

Deputy Lord Lieutenant Jenny Loynton said: "I have been hugely impressed by the students who have taken onboard what the meaning of these virtues are. For me, as the Governor of another school, this has opened my eyes as to what else students can do.

"Mrs Gould has done brilliant work to bring so much to this school and to inspire these kids – you can see in their eyes how engaged they are. "I spoke to some of the Year 7 children before they went out on their litter pick and I was so impressed by just how mature and organised they were."

Since the end of lockdown John Willmott has unveiled a number of schemes aimed at raising students' aspirations and building spirit with the school. Alongside the character virtues, it has worked to develop behaviour and pastoral systems, while also evolving the curriculum.

A consultation into the potential change of name to 'The Royal Sutton School' has now closed, while plans have also been unveiled for a new badge and redesigned uniform. The building's interiors are already being decorated with inspirational quotes from historic figures. Headteacher Nicola Gould revealed that the consultation into the change of name had provoked a strong response, with nearly 500 replies that overwhelmingly backed adopting the new 'Royal' title.

The results of the consultation will be shared with ATLP Trustees, who will make the final decision on the change. The Deputy Lord Lieutenant threw her support behind the idea, too.

She said:

"I fully support the change of name and I will be sending a message to the Lord Lieutenant which hopefully he'll pass on to His Majesty – and we sincerely hope that a member of the Royal family will come to Sutton Coldfield and officially open the school once it has its new name!"

During their visit, the VIPs also toured classrooms, where students were learning about the Coronation and the Monarchy. Councillor Parkin said: "I've been into the school many times and met Mrs Gould and I think what she's looking to do here is great.



Primary Science Quality Mark

By Miss Kerry Lynch

Congratulations to you all on achieving the Primary Science Quality Mark. We wish you every success as you continue to develop science in your school.



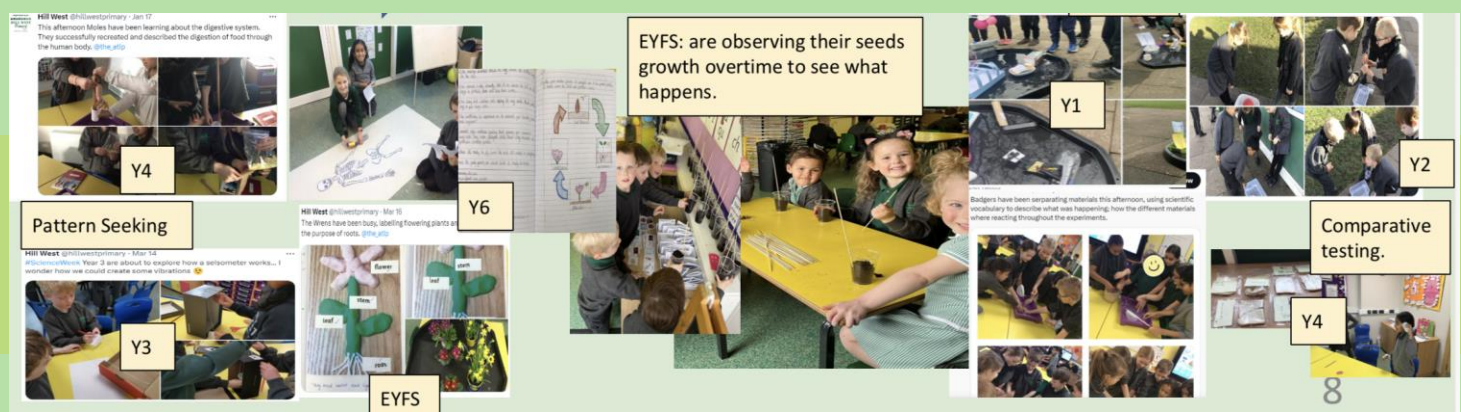
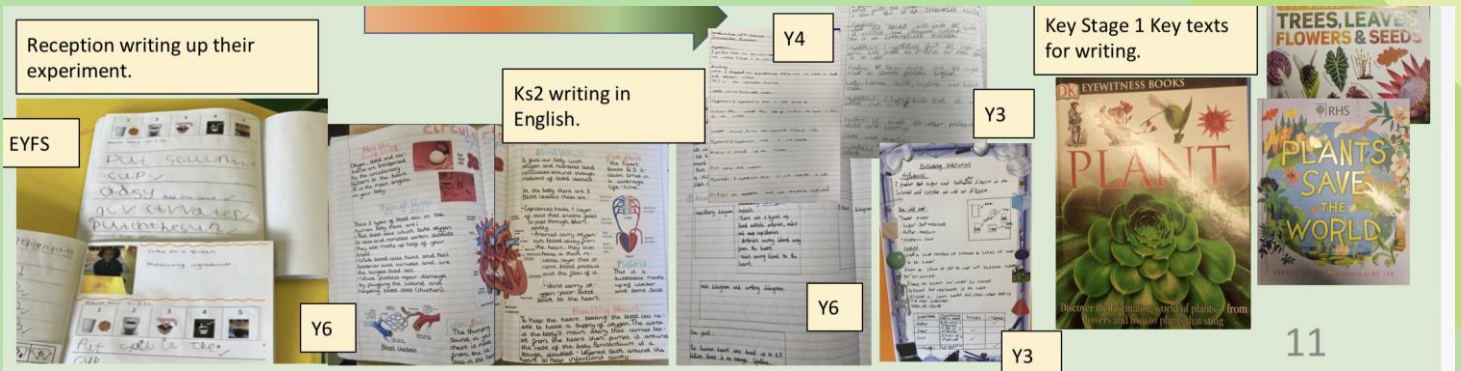
As Science Lead at Hill West Primary, I was delighted to hear that we have received our Primary Science Quality Mark Award. Preparation for the award included collecting evidence and developing the curriculum. We also had to ensure that Science has a clear vision and a deeper skill focus, which is owned by all. The hard work has definitely been worth every second.

I now look forward to the future of Science at Hill West and creating the new action plan that will renew our award in 2026. I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all the staff, children, parents and community for their support and enthusiasm along this adventure.

We should be receiving our certificate shortly – so keep an eye out on Twitter for when we accept it.

Below are some extracts from the portfolio that I created to provide evidence for the award. This is just some of the fantastic learning that has been happening in Science this year at Hill West.

Miss Kerry Lynch, Science Lead



Year 1 – Class Assembly

By Miss Emily Arkinstall

This half term Year One has been learning all about the Buddhist festival of Vesak. It is also known as Wesak or Buddha Day. This festival is an important celebration for Buddhists around the world as it was the day Buddha was born, enlightened and passed away.

During Vesak, Buddhists engage in various religious activities to honour the Buddha's life and teachings. These activities may include attending temple ceremonies, participating in meditation sessions, making offerings, and performing acts of kindness and generosity. Decorated temples and homes, illuminated with colourful lights and lanterns, symbolise the enlightenment and wisdom of the Buddha.

Vesak is a time for Buddhists to reflect on the principles of Buddhism, such as compassion, mindfulness, and the pursuit of enlightenment. It is also an occasion for followers to come together, practise mindfulness, and deepen their understanding of the Buddha's teachings. Vesak is not only celebrated as a religious festival but also serves as a reminder of the importance of peace, harmony, and ethical living for Buddhists around the world.

It is celebrated on the first full moon in May, so we spent the weeks beforehand preparing for this wonderful celebration with an assembly. The children worked creatively to create their lanterns. They considered the colours and patterns they wanted to include to make their lanterns unique to them. The children learned a variety of songs for the assembly all about Vesak, peace, and love. The children loved practising the songs and the accompanying dance moves!

The children also created their very own kindness poster including a decorated lotus flower and a sentence about an act of kindness they planned to do during Vesak. The children learnt their assembly lines as homework and practised every day in school, growing in confidence each time they rehearsed.

The day we were all waiting for had finally arrived, Friday 5th May, it was finally Vesak. The hall had been decorated with bunting, lotus flowers and candles....it was magical! The children walked to their spaces with a mixture of nerves and excitement. They showcased their learning of Vesak beautifully, saying their lines with confidence and expression. They sang tunefully and danced energetically! It was a pleasure to see the children present their assembly with such confidence. Dr Clarke praised the children for their impressive work and she said she couldn't believe they were only in Year 1. Another fantastic assembly Year 1 – you were all amazing!



Year 2 Class Assembly

By Miss Kerry Lynch

What an amazing assembly! Year 2 have done it again! Not only did they stage an amazing Nativity, they have set the bar so high that Key Stage Two will have to work even harder now with their assemblies.

The Year 2 play was a remarkable display of talent, inclusivity, and teamwork. The performance showcased the children's dedication and their ability to work together to create something truly special. The play centred around the captivating story of the Big Bad Wolf, but with a unique twist. Instead of portraying the wolf as a villain, the children brilliantly acted out the narrative from the wolf's perspective, offering a fresh and imaginative take on a classic tale.

Throughout the performance, the children displayed their creativity and storytelling abilities as they delved into the character of the wolf. By exploring the wolf's point of view, they brought depth and complexity to the story, challenging traditional stereotypes and encouraging empathy.

All the children used loud clear voices, using prosody as they retold the story about the Wolf. All our children were stars. We witnessed fabulous acting and even some stunts, such as the wolf putting on a dress and Grandma falling and knocking herself out cold as she reached for her clothes. We eventually found out that the wolf was good friends with Grandma! He did her washing, her shopping, her sewing and even made vegetarian cuisine that turns him green but that's enough said about that!

Through their acting, the students demonstrated their understanding of character development and brought the story to life. They embraced their roles with enthusiasm, showing their ability to engage the audience and draw them into the narrative.

Not only did they act, the children sang beautifully. The first song they sang was 'Whose Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf', which perfectly complemented the theme and added a touch of playfulness to the performance. The children were very clear in saying they are not afraid but accused us of being afraid.

Finally, they sang the heart-warming song 'You Can Count On Me' by Bruno Mars. It was a highlight of the play because they incorporated British Sign Language (BSL) signing alongside the singing. Most impressively they had learned how to sign the song all the way through. This allowed the children to demonstrate their commitment to accessibility and inclusivity, ensuring that everyone could enjoy and participate in the performance.

We are so very proud to be their teachers. Now we look forward to performing our Maypole dance at the Summer Fair. In the meantime we need lots of practise.

Miss Lynch, Mrs Massey and Mrs Kaur



Year 6 Birmingham Canals Trip

By Mrs Kerry Lampitt, Mr Chris Ellison and Mr Ryan Horne

Year 6 had an unforgettable experience on their recent trip to the Birmingham Canals. The trip was a perfect blend of education, adventure, and exploration, allowing the children to learn about the rich history of the canals while enjoying a thrilling boat trip through the tunnels.

The day began with eager anticipation as the children boarded the bus, their excitement palpable. Upon arrival at the canals, they were greeted by knowledgeable guides who accompanied them on their journey. The guides, well-versed in the history and significance of the canals, immediately captured the attention of the children with their fascinating stories.

The educational aspect of the trip commenced with an interactive session that delved into the historical importance of the Birmingham Canals. The children learned about the vital role the canals played during the Industrial Revolution, serving as a lifeline for transportation of goods and raw materials. They discovered how the canals transformed Birmingham into a thriving industrial centre, leading to its nickname, the "Workshop of the World."

Eager to witness the canals' marvels first-hand, the children embarked on a boat trip through the tunnels. As they glided along on the water, the children marvelled at the impressive engineering behind the canal system. They heard captivating tales of the challenges faced by the canal builders and the ingenious solutions that were devised.

The boat trip through the tunnels was a highlight of the day. Year 6 experienced a sense of adventure and discovery as the boat made its way through the dark and mysterious tunnels. They gained a deeper appreciation for the dedication and skill required to construct these incredible feats of engineering.

Throughout the trip, Year 6 actively engaged in discussions and asked thought-provoking questions. They showed genuine curiosity, eager to learn more about the canals and their significance.

As the day drew to a close and the students returned to school, it was evident that the trip to the Birmingham Canals had left an indelible impression on everyone. They departed with a newfound understanding of the historical significance of the canals and the immense effort that went into their construction.



King Charles III Coronation Celebration Day

By Ms Kelly Bailey



We felt that it was important for Hill West to mark the occasion with a day of activities across school. We joined in with millions of people across the globe in celebrating the momentous occasion by learning about our King and thinking ahead to the future of his reign.

Preparations began with the task of blowing up over 150 balloons! Thanks go to Mrs Pardo who just so happened to have an electric pump in her classroom. During the morning, History lessons across school took place, looking back at the history of our monarchy, the Royal family tree and how Charles became King. I was delighted to take part in conversations and discussions about what sort of leader they think King Charles III will be. We found his interest in our environment and sustainability particularly pleasing and we are hopeful that some changes will occur soon.

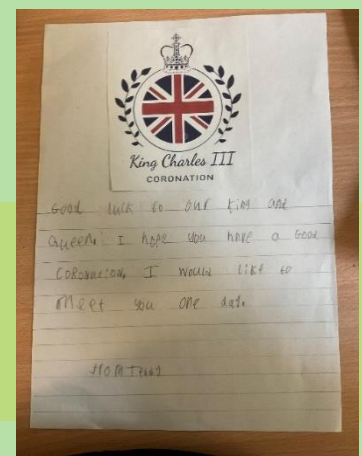


Children also spent some time creating some work to go inside a whole school time capsule- their legacy will live on! Every class contributed some work and some items to reflect their class. Some lovely helpers then sealed and buried the box of treasures in a safe spot on our school field. Perhaps their future relatives will one day uncover what we secretly placed inside.



KS2 had to flex their long-term memories and took part in a History curriculum quiz. Teams were selected to represent their house in a bid to earn house points. The house which managed to grab the house point prize and had their name immortalised on our new trophy was Pankhurst! A big well done to everyone involved. The quiz will return as an annual event- can Pankhurst keep their title in the future?

Reception spent the week before our special day learning about the coronation and all things royal. This was rounded off with a lovely picnic-style afternoon where parents were able to spend time with their child in school, ending with an uplifting song from our fabulous choir. Thank you to those who were able to attend. There were, of course, many other activities taking place across school and I hope that every child came home enthused about the coronation weekend ahead of them. Keep your eyes peeled for information coming home so you can view and order a special commemorative tea towel bearing the children's portraits!



Hill West Fun Run

By Miss Sophie Beardmore

The Hill West annual Fun Run on Sunday 14th May, proved to be a fantastic event held in the scenic surroundings of Sutton Park. The weather couldn't have been more ideal, as the bright sunshine added a touch of warmth to the occasion. Participants had the option to walk or run the 4-kilometre route, making it an inclusive event for families to enjoy together.

The route commenced near the iconic Jamboree Stone and led participants towards the beautiful Keeper Pool before looping back to the starting point. As participants approached the finish line near the Jamboree Stone, excitement filled the air, knowing that a delightful treat awaited them from the ice-cream van. This sweet reward provided a perfect ending to the Fun Run, bringing smiles to the faces of both children and adults alike.

The Hill West annual Fun Run was a resounding success, thanks to the picturesque location, ideal weather conditions, and the enthusiastic participation of families. It not only promoted physical activity but also fostered a sense of community spirit and enjoyment.

The course was completed in record time. With our first runners, along with Mr Ellison, crossing over the finish line in under 17 minutes. Runners from Hill West:

Boys – 1 st) Connor Bailey	2 nd) Oliver Taylor	3 rd) Teddy Martin
Girls – 1 st) Jiya Sund	2 nd) Sophie Yau	3 rd) Annabelle Taylor

The Fun Run has been well received by parents and here are some of their comments:

Louise Smith (PTFA Chair) - "The annual Hill West 4km family run/walk event is always a highlight of the school year seeing all of the families come together to complete the race. The children are so excited to receive their finisher's medal and I think the parents secretly love this too."

Talwar Family - "We enjoy the fun run every year, as it's a great way to do something together as a family and with the children's friends from school. It's also a good excuse for a picnic and play after - a great day out!"

"We all enjoyed the fun run. As we a family of runners it's nice the kids got the opportunity to take part in an organised run. It's great that we could run altogether and also great that the school organises these events for families. The weather was splendid too!" - Sund family

"The fun run was a lovely way to spend the morning for the whole family. It was well organised and just the right length for the children. It's a great way to get fresh air and exercise, whilst raising money for the school"

– Freeman Family

"We all really enjoyed the fun run! It was just the right distance, for our family anyway, and it was great that those that couldn't run were able to walk it. The weather certainly helped and I thought the atmosphere was really lovely. It felt very community spirited. It was great to have the encouragement of parent and teacher volunteers along the way (the children really liked that) and was a fantastic opportunity to spend more time with classmates and other parents! We will definitely be participating again next year!" Carroll Family



P.E. Updates for Spring and Summer

By Mr Joel Holmes

During the Spring term, the weather may have continued to be miserable, but fortunately for the children of Hill West they have been able to participate in a range of sporting activities. As the weather improves, there will be further opportunities for children across school to participate in events.

Year 6 Football Team

The Year 6 boys have been involved in some incredibly tightly contested matches over the year. They narrowly missed out on a number of victories across the year. A game against Minworth was a close contest with the score 2 vs 1 to Minworth as we entered the final few minutes of the game. Then a misfired shot from Hill West led to a swift counter-attack and a third goal for Minworth, who emerged 3 vs 1 victors. In a match against Little Sutton on home turf, the Hill West team battled back twice in the game.

Unfortunately, the score separated in the end with another last-gasp goal for Little Sutton. The team will no doubt come back stronger. We hope to register the first win of the season against Four Oaks in the next couple of weeks.



Panathlon Finals

The Hill West Panathlon Team was hugely successful in their competition back in November, being placed 2nd out of 9 competing schools. They returned to school with a silver medal haul. This meant that we were invited back to the finals day compete against the best of the best from across Birmingham. Over the 9 Panathlon events, the team united and worked doggedly to register the best scores they could. Eventually they finished 4th out the 8 finalists, - not quite the result we wanted - but 4th out of all Birmingham Schools is a remarkable achievement.



Hill West Netball Team

The first season for the Netball team has been one of constant improvement. They were in a league with established schools and this has been a huge challenge - one which our team embraced. The girls involved have relished the chance to test their skills against the best teams in Sutton. In their most recent match, the team were unfortunate to be on the losing end against Boldmere who ran away 5-4 winners.



Wylde Green Rotary 6-a-Side Tournament

With two teams representing Hill West at the event, we were confident going into the tournament that we could show off our best. The Year 6 Team was successful in their group stage, winning twice, drawing once and finishing on 7 points: second in their group. Similarly, the Year 5 team played a solid group-stage, picking up a total of 8 points; also second in their group. Our Year 5 team were able to progress out of the group-stage as the highest scoring 2nd placed team and reached the semi-finals. They eventually bowed out on penalties to Little Sutton after drawing 1 vs 1 in regular time and 6-5 on penalties. The Year 5s will be back stronger next year and will have their sights set on the commemorative shield. Well done to all who participated in the tournament.

