

THE HILL WEST HERALD

**HILL WEST**
Primary
FOUR OAKS

AUTUMN TERM 2 2023
ISSUE 47

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Message from the Head Teacher

By Dr Beth Clarke

Leading with compassion and kindness so that everyone in our school feels seen, soothed, safe and secure

At Hill West our staff team are wholly committed to leading, teaching and interacting with each other and our pupils and families with kindness and compassion. This means we put positive relationships and knowing our children, at the heart of all we do. We understand from published research that not all children are the same. We know that our children have had different pre and post-natal experiences and each will behave, interact, learn and play having been shaped by these.

We have been committed to a relational approach for many years. But what does this actually mean. In the simplest form this means treating our children with dignity and respect, with kindness and curiosity and refraining from interactions, dialogue or actions that could shame, humiliate, intimidate, and ultimately break connection. This is why we refrain from what we believe are connection damaging routines and practices such as

- Placing a child in a position of no escape
- Use destructive criticism, sarcasm or belittling methods to humiliate
- Making unrealistic
- Using behaviour charts
- Sending children out of class
- Losing our temper
- Making 'you will' statements

We also know though, that we are shaped by our early lived experiences: The way we were parented; the way we were schooled. We recognize that we have a default position (internal working model) that we will revert to, particularly in times of stress or anxiety. At Hill West we always want to be the very best version of ourselves, recognizing when our emotional responses are likely to mean we are not best placed to deal with a situation or scenario and asking for help from a colleague (switching in). We know there is always more we can do, more we can learn, and more we can practice. This week we have been delighted to welcome **Hannah Simnett**, the founder of **Cherished** (locally based charity) into school to deliver staff training and are pleased to advise that she will be returning to run workshops / sessions for parents and wider family, later this year.

Hannah's work centers on the four S's of secure attachment (safe, seen, soothed and secure) and the quote above is taken from one of her presentation slides. Hannah encouraged us all to think about four buckets (which she called love tanks stored in children's hearts), each of which is filled, in the first instance by parents and wider family networks. Some children start school with all four buckets/tanks full to the brim meaning they have the necessary pre-requisites to be successful in school. Others however, have a deficit in one or more of their buckets/tanks or indeed develop a deficit temporarily due to life circumstances e.g. bereavement / separation. Hannah encouraged us to consider how children may present in class if their love tanks were depleted and what we would need to do to support the invisible deficit. We are all committed to remaining curious, where we seek to understand the 'why' and acknowledge that the relationship we (as staff) have with children, sets the climate in the classroom and our school.



"You will never make a child feel better by making them feel worse about themselves."

ATLP News

By Dr Beth Clarke

Highly respected education leader to review Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across our family of schools.

I was delighted to find out, earlier this academic year, that one of the UK's most highly respected education leaders, Ava Sturridge-Packer CBE, says she is 'very excited' to work with the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership to help define its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy. I first met Ava when I was appointed as the new Head Teacher at Hill West, twenty years ago. She was assigned as my new-to-role mentor by Birmingham City Council and I couldn't have wished for a better advocate and champion.



A teacher of huge experience, at a variety of contexts in the West Midlands and beyond, Ava was appointed a National Leader of Education and her school achieved a Teaching School designation. Ava was Head at St Mary's Church of England Primary School in Handsworth for 22 years, leading it from Special Measures to Outstanding. Over the years she was seconded from St Mary's as Executive Headteacher to a number of schools, where she made a significant difference to children and families.

Ava's role with ATLP will include working with the Partnership's leaders and staff in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. I am very excited about welcoming Ava back to Hill West and working collaboratively with her again to ensure our EDI practices are fully considered and continue to improve.

"I'm very excited to be helping ATLP on its journey to improve the Partnership's EDI strategy," she said.

"I'm looking forward to supporting the Partnership strategically with EDI, as well as helping individual schools to understand how to better apply policy in a practical way. I will also be meeting parents as well, where they have views that they want to share.

"It's an opportunity to help one of the most respected educational trusts shape an important policy, so I'm very excited about it!"

As part of her work, Ava hopes to also have input into shaping ATLP's recruitment policy too. She previously worked for the DFE on a two-year Recruitment and Retention project, and worked with a group of Birmingham-based senior professionals who were funded by the National College to support diverse leaders on their pathways to success. She explained:

"By looking at recruitment, and the retention of staff, we can create pathways for people who are from diverse backgrounds, to promote a more representative mix, which is very important."

"In a sense, it's about opening the doors a little bit wider for people. We should make sure that there aren't barriers that stop people from going up the ladder, and accessing opportunities that will benefit the trust and the children and families."

"At the school level, I'll be doing things like looking at the school environment with the leadership team, and advising them in terms of resources, books and curriculum design."

As a member of the Windrush Generation – Ava first came to England as five-year-old child. Ava's background as a trailblazing Black teacher has given her a valuable insight into issues of equality, diversity and inclusion.

**EQUALITY
INCLUSION
DIVERSITY
EQUITY**
never fails

She said: “I think that the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership and its leadership team should be commended for grasping the nettle and being brave enough to say that -- while things have certainly moved on from where they were previously – they are still not good enough and there are always improvements that can be made in education, to quote Sir Tim Brighouse from the past.

“It’s about improving on your previous best, and always striving to move forward and learn,” said Ava.

Over the last 15 years, Ava has been a judge for the Pearson National Teaching Awards, travelling the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, visiting the best primary and secondary schools nominated for best practice in a range of areas.

“In my work, I want people to feel that it’s a partnership, and develop a relationship of trust so that we can grow together.”

She added: “This role working with ATLP might be my swansong at the end of my education career, but I’m looking forward to joining them on their journey – and I hope that in a year or two we will be able to see evidence of progress, in tangible terms and that awareness has been raised significantly across the

Partnership.

“Getting EDI right in education is incredibly important, because what happens in our schools impacts on all aspects of society. Schools can bring about real change.”

Richard Gill CBE, the CEO of ATLP, said:

“I am delighted that an educational leader of the standing of Ava Sturridge-Packer will be helping ATLP along its journey to reinvigorate our approach to EDI, both in terms of a broad strategy and also how it applies on the ground, in our schools, with our leaders and staff.

“Ava’s background, experience and considerable achievements make her the ideal person to guide us as we engage with these very important issues.”



PTFA Events

By Mrs. Rebecca George

The Hill West PTFA consists of a group of volunteers who work together to raise funds for the children of Hill West Primary School. A new committee was elected in the Autumn Term of 2023, by those present at the Annual General Meeting, held on the 13th October 2023, and this consists of:

Chairperson: Louise Eales

Vice Chairperson: Ian Binns

Treasurer: Rob Cook

Secretary: Sherrie Fiddy

This committee, supported by members old and new, worked tirelessly to organise a range of events, The Halloween Disco, Christmas Movie Night and The Christmas Raffle, during the Autumn term for all of our children to enjoy.

The Halloween Disco took place on Friday 20th October 2023, attracting many of our families to enjoy some spooky time together whilst raising funds that directly benefit the children of Hill West Primary School. This event was a huge success. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone (children, parents, committee members and staff) sincerely for all their efforts and hard work, in whatever form that was, over the weeks leading up to the event, to help the PTFA to prepare and deliver this fabulous evening for the children. I am delighted to let you know that the event made a profit of approximately £1500 matching the profit of last year's equally incredible Halloween Disco.

The children (and adults) looked amazing in their costumes and very much enjoyed dancing, purchasing sweets, pick 'n' mix, chocolate, crisps, drinks, glow in the dark tattoos, hot dogs, samosas, spring rolls and there were many thank yous from parents for including a bar.

Thank you to all of you who were able to come along and support this event, making it such a success.

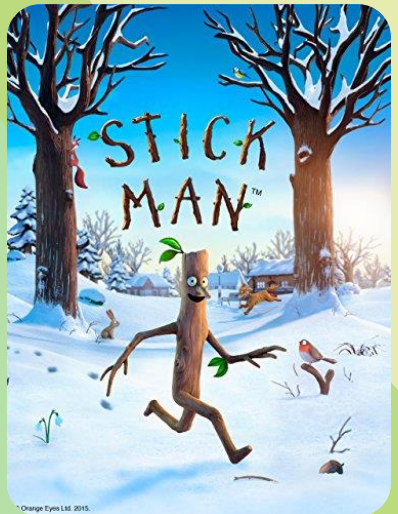


The Christmas Movie Night was held on Friday 15th December 2024 from 5:30pm to 8:00pm. During this evening our Reception and Y1 children got comfy in their classrooms before watching three short movies (Stick Man, The Elf on the Shelf: An Elf's Story and Raymond Briggs', Father Christmas) or took part in Christmas crafts and colouring activities. Our children from Years 2 to 6 chilled with their friends whilst watching the movie; ELF. Tickets were priced at £8 a child and purchased via the MCAS app. Each ticket included a hotdog, drink and a bag of sweets / chocolate bar. Additional drinks and jugs of water were also available on the evening. This evening was very much enjoyed by all. Lots of children attended wearing their best Christmas jumper / pyjamas and brought along a pillow, blanket and even beanbags! The evening ended with a very special, personalised video message from The Big Man himself and there were certainly smiles all round – even when there was an impromptu evacuation from the KS1 building due to a false fire alarm!

Children, you were a delight to have in school on this evening and it felt very Christmassy indeed! We do not yet have a figure for money raised from this evening but we do know that it is a significant amount and will share this with you when we can.

Once again, thank you to all of you who supported this event, making it such a success.

The next PTFA committee meeting is at 7:30pm on Monday 15th January in the KS1 building and anyone is welcome to come along. At the meeting, we will review any outstanding actions, discuss what went well at the Movie Night and what we can do better next time, before looking forwards to the next events, **the PTFA Quiz Night**, which will be held on **Friday 23rd February 2024**, closely followed by **The PTFA Spring Disco on Friday 15th March 2024**.



Avid Readers

By Mrs. Alison Downes

As Amanda Spielman, Ofsted chief inspector, said last year: "Reading is the gateway to all learning, a vital life skill – reading to learn, to expand horizons and for pleasure."

Here at Hill West we have known for years that it is a well-established fact that children exposed to daily reading of just one book accumulate around 290,000 more words by the age of 5 compared to those who do not engage in regular reading with a parent or caregiver (Logan, 2019). Moreover, children who cultivate a habit of reading for enjoyment on a daily basis not only outperform their counterparts in reading tests but also exhibit a broader vocabulary, enhanced general knowledge, and a deeper understanding of diverse cultures.

Nevertheless findings nationally show that a considerable number of children possess the ability to read, yet opt not to engage in the activity, as they haven't discovered its personal relevance to them. Not so here at Hill West, where there are many children who read for pure enjoyment. This term I have had the pleasure of hosting three Avid Reader breakfasts, where we celebrated readers from years 1 to 6. It was a lovely opportunity to relish a bacon roll and hear from some of our keenest readers about the authors and texts that they enjoyed the most.

Our own evidence-informed literature spine here at Hill West incorporates a harmonious blend of fiction, poetry, and non-fiction texts. Each text has been chosen with care, considering its richness in vocabulary, cultural significance, and conceptual depth. These selections not only contribute to our knowledge-focused curriculum but also align with the global aspects of our educational approach, including personal development, wellbeing, diversity, equality, and inclusion. Furthermore, these choices reflect our dedication to the UNCRC as a school deeply embedded in the principles of rights.

Highlighting the significance of these factors, reading aloud stands out as the singularly most crucial activity for achieving success in reading. Hence, it becomes our clear responsibility to read to every child at Hill West daily, exposing them to the pleasures of language through our thoughtfully selected class novels. This approach ensures that even our less proficient readers encounter the same enriching and captivating books that fluent readers explore independently, thereby motivating them to become more adept readers themselves.

Our key texts and class novel aim to challenge readers and ensure that they emerge from Year 6 as confident, well-rounded readers. The evidence certainly speaks for itself in Year 6 as Mrs. Lampitt was bowled over by the numerous submissions she had for the coveted librarian roles - with almost half the year group applying. Furthermore, our reading buddy system is flourishing well with volunteers in Foxes and Otters sharing their passion for reading with younger members of our school community. Each week they meet up with their mentee, read together and discuss the stories. Year 4 and 5 enjoy exploring new reading ideas with Rayyah and Sophie from Otters in their weekly book club.

Taking pleasure in reading is thriving here at Hill West.



Aberdovey

By Miss Evette Barrett

On Monday 27th November 2023 our extremely excited Year 5 children and their teachers eagerly waited for the coach to arrive outside Hill West Primary School! We rolled our suitcases up the school drive; all packed ready for the adventures that were waiting ahead of us in Aberdovey. As seatbelts were buckled and checked, the children waved good bye to their loved ones and we set off on our journey to Aberdovey, located on the Welsh west coast, north of Aberystwyth. On board were 48 extremely excited children from Hares and Badgers with 4 adults: Miss Barrett, Mr. Clarke, Mrs. Begum, and Mrs. Swain. As school faded into the distance behind us, our attention turned towards the adventures which might await us...Would we go jetty-jumping? rock-climbing? canoeing? swimming? No-one was sure, but the excited chatter of children filled the coach as we headed onwards to our destination.



Upon arrival, our first place to stop was in the activity hall so that we could all eat lunch. Once the children were introduced to their team leaders and groups: Team Haimester led by Paul with Miss Barrett; Team Dufdon led by Ian with Mr. Clarke; Team Ramsey led by El with Mrs. Swain; and Team Yaseen led by Callum with Mrs. Begum. The team leaders took the children off to show them their common rooms and gave them a tour of the centre. They then went to their accommodation blocks and were shown the rooms in which they would sleep for the next four nights.

Once there, they were given the chance to choose their own beds, and then shown how to make them, using the sheets and bedding provided. After settling in, the children met up again in their teams. Over the next five days the children would get to know the other children in their teams exceptionally well and they were eager to start their challenge and new activities.

By five o'clock, everyone was ready for some food, so we took our first visit to the canteen area. The food was delicious! The children took part in evening activities, which included setting team expectations, discussing what the children would like to achieve over the week and how they could work together to achieve their goals. The children explored the centre in the dark, went gorge walking in the dark, and played team games. Everyone met up at 8:00pm in the canteen to enjoy a well-deserved drink and some toast along with some social time as a whole group, before making their way to their rooms to get ready for bed. By 10:00pm all was quiet and everyone was fast asleep after an exhilarating first day in Aberdovey.

The children took part in the following activities daily:

- Gorge walking
- Canoeing across the Estuary
- Abseiling
- Jog and Dip
- Orienteering
- Beach Exploration
- Team building games and activities
- The challenge Wall
- Mountain scrambling
- Star Gazing and roasting marshmallows by the camp fire
- Jumping out of a speed boat into the sea and off the jetty (Mrs. Begum was a super star and jumped off the jetty with the children!)



Enthusiastically and confidently, the children took on challenges, worked outside their comfort zones, pulled together as a team and showed great resilience.

The children were determined to take every minuscule drop of excitement, adventure and learning from the week of activities, with them back to school. Celebrating everything they had achieved during their time at Aberdovey, sharing their successes, challenges and lessons they had learnt about themselves, their friends and about working as part of a team. What an adventure!

On the final morning after breakfast, the children completed their final activities, packing their cases and having their last lunch together. They were presented with their certificates of achievement for taking part in all the activities, challenges and adventures. Then a coach full of 48 very tired children along with 4 exhausted members of staff returned on the long journey back to school where their loved ones were waiting eagerly to congratulate them on an amazing triumph. We are so proud of all the children and staff, for each and every accomplishment, whether that be staying away from home for the first time, stepping outside their comfort zone, working as part of a team in different ways or completing an activity that they never thought was possible. Our children grew in confidence, showed great resilience and determination! What an amazing trip we all had in Aberdovey!



Harmonious Memories: A Musical Journey with Our School Choir

By Mr. Ryan Horne

This term, our school choir embarked on two unforgettable musical journeys, showcasing their talent and spreading the joy of music within the local community. The first enchanting event took place on the 21st of November at the historic Lichfield Cathedral, where our choir joined forces with six other choirs hailing from various corners of Sutton Coldfield. This unique gathering formed a harmonious collaboration that resonated with the spirit of unity and shared musical passion.

Parents, friends, and music enthusiasts gathered to witness a symphony of voices coming together in a celebration of song. The Lichfield Cathedral provided a breath-taking backdrop for this musical spectacle, enhancing the ethereal experience for both performers and the eager audience.

The repertoire for the evening was a delightful mix of classic and contemporary pieces, each carefully selected to showcase the versatility and depth of the combined choirs. The performance opened with the hauntingly beautiful "Somewhere in my Memory," transporting the listeners to a realm of nostalgia and warmth. The choir then seamlessly transitioned into the emotive "Lights Will Lead Me Home".

The pinnacle of the evening's performance was the jubilant rendition of "I wish it could be Christmas every day," a festive anthem that had the entire audience tapping their feet and joining in the seasonal celebration. The resulting performance was both joyful and festive for all in attendance.

The pride in the eyes of parents and the sense of accomplishment among the choir members were tangible as the final notes echoed through the majestic cathedral. This event not only showcased the talent of our school choir but also fostered a sense of camaraderie and community spirit among the participating choirs, leaving a lasting impact on the musical landscape of Sutton Coldfield.

The second enchanting journey led our choir to the All Saints Church in Mere Green, a beautiful, local venue and adorned with the festive spirit of Christmas. Here, our choir experienced the joy of giving back to the community by participating in a unique Christmas tree decorating initiative within the church premises.

The atmosphere was filled with laughter and festive cheer as the choir members adorned their designated Christmas tree with an array of sparkling ornaments and twinkling lights. The act of decorating the tree served as a prelude to the musical magic that was about to unfold.

With the Christmas tree standing resplendent as a symbol of communal creativity, our choir took centre stage to serenade the congregation with a repertoire of classic Christmas carols. The acoustics of the All Saints Church amplified their voices, creating a truly magical ambiance that resonated with the spirit of the season.

Following the performance, the choir engaged in post-concert festivities, participating in craft activities that further strengthened the bonds among the members. The joyful atmosphere extended beyond the church walls, encapsulating the essence of the holiday season.



First Christmas at Hill West

By Mrs. Lisa Pardo



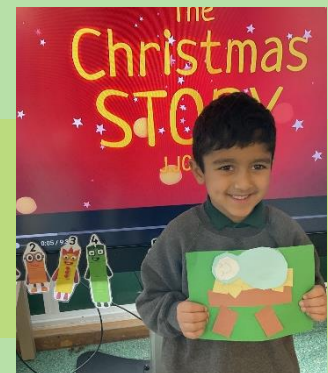
Christmas is a magical time, especially when it is your first Christmas at school. The children have been full of excitement and anticipation. We have been greeted at the gate by smiley faces and a 'countdown' of sleeps until Christmas. We certainly have enjoyed this December with our fantastic classes. To begin the December festivities children carefully created their very own cheeky elves- using a range of clever techniques, including: hole-punching, cutting, using templates and constructing. We know that these will have looked fabulous on your home Christmas trees - and they certainly made the staff and children smile.

The Robins and Wrens learned all about what a Christingle represents: the Orange representing the world; the candle symbolising the light of the world; and the red ribbon symbolising God's love for the world through the blood of Christ. We took a wonderful walk up to All Saints church in some very wet weather. This didn't dampen the delightful atmosphere in our local church. The children sat beautifully and listened to the Christmas story - joining in so sensibly. They watched and listened to the talented guitarists and violinists - who knows which of your children will be there performing when they too are in Key stage Two? After lots of fun rehearsals in class, the children sang along heartily to the songs 'Love shone down' and 'Sing Christingle'. They proudly paraded through church with their handmade Christingles. What a special event to be part of!

Carefully choosing the design for our Christmas cards and calendars is something important to us. We know that many families will keep these as special memories for the future. Our calendars and cards allowed children to showcase the skills they have been learning and practising this term.

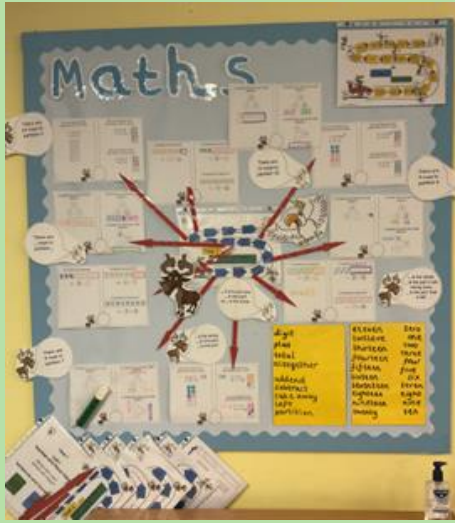
Reception were treated to an invite to watch the nursery nativity. They felt so grow up and their faces showed their enjoyment. I wonder if they can remember when they were that little?

A special visitor came to Hill West and there certainly was a buzz in the air. Santa and his elves listened carefully to each child. Some felt a little nervous, but were happy to greet him with a smile. They felt very proud of themselves and rightly so. Each child has been gifted a small reindeer countdown keepsake from all of the staff in Reception. We hope that this keepsake will provide memories of their first Christmas at Hill West. We trust you all had a wonderful holiday with your families and that you had some time to slow down and spend time with those most precious to you.



Mathematics in Year 1

By Miss Sophie Beardmore



Year 1 have had a busy half term working with Colin and Coco in Maths! We have looked at numbers and place value up to 100, addition and subtraction facts of numbers between 7 – 11 and 3 dimensional shapes.

The children began the half term exploring and counting to numbers up to 100. They looked at the structure of these numbers as units of tens and ones, how they know a number has more tens or ones than another number and how they can prove it.

Using a blank number line, the children then started to represent the number's position, when there was only a few represented on the number line, such as tens. This then progressed on to the children estimating where numbers might be placed, using their knowledge based on what they have learnt about number lines; eg if you have 40 and 50 and are estimating 47, find half between 40 and 50 because we know that that is 5 first. In addition, the children then progressed on to counting forward and backwards from a given number using a hundreds square. They compared two given numbers, deciding which one was the smallest and which was the greatest. The children were then asked to justify their answers based on their understanding of the tens and ones.



The children then moved on to addition and subtraction facts of numbers between 7 to 11. Within every number, they explored three areas: how it can be partitioned into two parts to support our addition and subtraction number sentences; how many addition facts there are for that number; how many subtraction facts there are; and how sentences can be written. The children, since Reception, have been exposed to number sentences being written in the format $2 + 3 = 5$, but this half term we have explored how number sentences can be written as $5 = 2 + 3$ and it still mean the same. This then meant that, although there are 11 ways of making ten, there can be 22 different ways of writing number sentences just by moving the equals sign and the total.



For the last week of the half term, the children consolidated their knowledge of 2D shapes being 'flat and closed' which was used to help inform our new learning of 3D shapes. The children explored what the meaning of a 3D shape is 'a solid shape' that isn't flat but lifts off the page. The children explored the properties of some of these shapes too, including cuboid, cube, pyramid and sphere.



Nativity 2023

By Mrs. Farzana Walele

Welcome to Baarmy Bethlehem!

This year's performance depicted the traditional Nativity story but with a whole heap of very excitable and party loving sheep...BAAAAAAA!

Cheeky, Rascal and Scamp, the party sheep, are the stars of our Nativity! When they see Bethlehem filling up with villagers...sorry citizens, they assume it's for a big celebration and they do not want to miss out! They escape from the flock and make their way into town, but although they find lots of things they love, like noise and crowds of people, there is no party.

The rest of our fabulous cast included: innkeepers; shepherds and sheep; citizens; Ceasar and his servants; a host of beatific Angels; Mary and Joseph; three kings and their camels; and finally the Star, who guided them all to witness the birth of Christ.

Our Nativity began weeks before the actual performances with the children studying their lines, rehearsing dances and memorising songs. Our fantastic Owls and Kingfishers showed an immense amount of maturity and artistic flair that they retained pretty much everything early on. This meant we could spend more time focussing on transitions between scenes....which again the children mastered quickly! Our performance this year not only demonstrated our talented children's acting skills but also highlighted their talents for singing and dancing, which were both performed with grace and enthusiasm. Who knew sheep and camels could dance so well?

What truly amazed us all though was the children's ability to learn all of their lines and deliver them with prosody, articulating each and every word. During both performances to families and friends all the children performed like actual superstars and we couldn't be more proud of them. They demonstrated amazing energy, enthusiasm and confidence throughout the performance, taking control of stage directions, moving props on and off the stage with ease and overcoming any mishaps that took place during the performances.

All the Year 2 teachers are incredibly proud of the commitment, effort and performance they saw from the children. Our Nativity would not have been the success it was without our Year 2 families and friends. A huge thank you from us all for your support with costumes, learning lines and those who came to watch. We hope you all had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the Year 2 team.



History in Year 4; The Mayans

By Miss Sarah Mooney

What a fantastic term in Year 4! We have been fortunate this term to have had numerous joyful experiences and workshops available to us. The children in Year 4 dedicated themselves to their History learning with great diligence. This term, our focus has been on exploring both the 'Ancient Civilisations of the World' and 'The Mayans.'. These subjects are entirely new to our curriculum, and we have thoroughly enjoyed witnessing the children's enthusiasm to towards them.

Our exploration of Ancient Civilisations provided an excellent opportunity for the children to showcase their knowledge through a successful time-travel-themed assembly. The children demonstrated fantastic understanding and worked diligently to ensure their facts were flawless for the presentation. A huge thank you goes to the parents for their hard work in creating the costumes, which all looked superb! The children guided us through various ancient civilizations, including the Ancient Sumerians, Egyptians, Greeks, Minoans, and Romans. Their acting and singing were beautiful, and the Egyptian dancers were remarkably expressive - apparently, it is not easy dancing in flip-flops! Although the children couldn't agree on which civilization was the best, they did an excellent job of educating us about the significance of each one.

Our exploration of History topics also provided the opportunity for an immersive Mayan workshop right here at school. The anticipation was high as we delved firsthand into Mayan society, immersing ourselves in a day of being Mayans. Throughout this engaging day, we explored the intricacies of Mayan sacrifice, with the children witnessing a recreation of the rituals involved and gaining insights into their societal significance (special kudos to Alice, the plastic dummy, for being a brilliant model). The day continued with a hands-on pottery session, allowing the children to express their creativity with clay and craft fantastic Mayan-themed pots to take home.

As budding archaeologists, we embarked on a practical archaeological dig, unearthing coins, ceramics, jewels, and religious artifacts. To cap off the day, we studied Mayan Mathematics, and to our surprise, the children seemed to revel in it more than modern Maths! Year 4 showcased their brilliance in converting English numbers to the Mayan numerical system, tackling calculations as authentic Mayan citizens. We are immensely proud of the hard work and dedication you exhibited – well done!



Last Christmas at Hill West

By Mrs. Kerry-Lynn Lampitt

As we journey through our final year in primary school, the memories we have created during special occasions like Christmas become treasured keepsakes in the corridors of our minds. The last Christmas and Christingle celebration in Year Six evoked a flurry of emotions - nostalgia for the cherished moments, excitement for the festivities, and a bittersweet realisation that this chapter of our lives is drawing to a close.



One of the enduring memories of this last Christmas was the palpable sense of love, friendship and joy that has enveloped our whole school. The anticipation built up as we decorated the classrooms, adorned the Christmas trees with handmade ornaments, and rehearsed heart-warming carols. There was an unmistakable buzz in the air - a collective excitement shared among classmates and teachers alike.

The Christingle service, with its symbolism and significance, held a special place in our hearts. The flickering glow of the candle nestled amidst the adorned orange, symbolizing hope and light, reminded us of the unity and support we have all found within our school community. As we stood together, each holding our Christingles, it was a poignant moment of harmony and reflection, marking the essence of the festive season which would last with us always.



Christmas lunch in Year Six was a culmination of merriment and togetherness. The School dining hall was transformed into a festive banquet, adorned with twinkling lights and tables filled with distinct chatter. Laughter echoed through the room as we savoured the delicious meal, sharing anecdotes and creating final memories of this beloved tradition.

Now, as we reflect fondly on our last Christmas and Christingle in Year Six, it's essential to carry these memories forward. They serve as reminders of the friendships forged, the lessons learned, and the experiences that have shaped us. We can look back and reminisce about the laughter shared during the festivities, the warmth of the school community, and the joy that has filled our hearts forever. Though this chapter may be coming to an end, the spirit of Christmas and the essence of the Christingle service will linger within us. We can carry forward the values of unity, hope, and compassion that these traditions represent, extending them beyond the school gates into our future endeavours.



As we bid 'adieu' to Year Six and our last Christmas at Hill West Primary School, let us hold these memories close, using them as guiding lights as we embark on new journeys. Our last Christmas and Christingle will forever remain etched in our minds and hearts, reminding us of the joy found in togetherness and the beauty of shared moments.

