

ACE; *Ambitious, Curious, and Ever-respectful*

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Message from the Head Teacher

By Dr. Beth Clarke

Often the rich experiences we gain outside of work impact directly, or indirectly, on our professional goals, aspirations or strategic priorities. I have been fortunate enough this year, now that my daughter is a little older, to revisit my passion for live theatre. I have committed to expanding my love of opera by branching out into other fields. In March, I enjoyed a visit to the Birmingham Royal Ballet to watch *Sleeping Beauty*. BRB's beautiful production was created by Sir Peter Wright, the genius behind the Company's famous *The Nutcracker* and *Swan Lake*. The company's current artistic director, Carlos Acosta believes his passion for making his company not only world-class but also accessible and enticing to new audiences is a driving principle. The talent, team work, dedication and hours of deliberate practice on show prompted me to reflect on our work in school.



As we know any ballet requires a group of individuals to work collaboratively to achieve more together than they could individually. A great dancer is able to connect seamlessly with their partner and the wider cast instead of trying to outperform other dancers. Similarly, in school, a great team learns the importance of being selfless, making the critical decisions together and sharing in the responsibility and accountability of those decisions. The ability to allow others to take or share the limelight is important too, recognising that each individual has unique talents and specialised skills that should be utilised to best effect.

A great dancer always gives their best effort because failing to do so would mean letting down the rest of the cast. As such any performance requires a group of individuals to work together for the greater good. Great performances have high energy, where individuals thrive off the interplay between each other. And *Sleeping Beauty* was truly opulent too, showcasing the role and creativity of costume designers and back stage staff.

Their amazing performance was underpinned, of course, by the vision of Carlos Acosta which had been embodied by the cast. This is perhaps one of the most important characteristics of a successful performance. It is essential that teams stay focused on their long term goals and that these are aspirational so that set-backs, such as, a fall off point, does not compromise spirit, belief or resilience. Resilience is an interesting concept. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape or the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties. Great teams learn from their set-backs, value the experience and evaluate their performance and this all contributes to their resilience.

We inevitably use these insights and reflections in our day to day lives. At Hill West we have a great team of practitioners who embody the shared vision that every child can be successful and should be supported to do so. Our team are happy to share the glory of success and the responsibility for set-backs. Our team are resilient, have endless amounts of energy, and are willing to help others develop into outstanding practitioners. Above all, our staff are a highly effective team with a genuine love of each other and for our school.

Reflecting on the characteristics of successful teams helps us to raise our aspirations still further whilst acknowledging the very real challenges we face in education currently.

ATLP News; Innovative spotlight gives students a glimpse of life in the creative sector

Shared by Dr. Beth Clarke

More than 250 students from eight different schools had a fascinating insight into life in the creative industries – from TV production to video game design – when they travelled to Arthur Terry school for an innovative event. On Tuesday, March 5th the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership (ATLP), hosted the third Trust-wide Careers Sector Spotlight – this time focusing on the creative industries.



The spotlight seminar invited nine high-flyers from across the creative sector to speak to the students – who came from both secondary and primary schools – about their route to success, what inspired them, and the benefits and challenges of working in their field.

Event organiser and Trust Lead for Careers, Alex Zarifeh, said: “The idea was to welcome students from across the partnership, who each have a passion for creativity, in order to showcase a cross-section of creative roles, as well as exploring some of the unique benefits of pursuing one’s dream profession, alongside the extra resilience frequently associated when pursuing freelance, short-term contract and portfolio careers”.

Birmingham’s beat-boxing Poet Laureate Jas Gardosi got proceedings off to an explosive start by performing her spellbinding poem ‘Be Poet’, before telling the students about how she had overcome shyness to become a sought-after public speaker. Vicky Boyce, of Third Kind Games, explained how she had found her natural space in the gaming industry, initially training to be a programmer but realising that game design was a better fit for her skills.

Arthur Terry alumni and ‘Hunger for the Hustle’ podcaster, Jake Fowler told the students: “It has been a dream to return to my old school after 20 years. Everyone has a story; it was a pleasure to share a little of mine.”

The children got a glimpse of life both behind and in front of the camera, when news duo Sam Hughes, a producer, and Rosie Dowsing, a journalist, talked to them about their work at ITV. Sam explained how he constantly worked on his creative output, making films outside of his day job just to hone his skills, while Rosie talked about the perseverance needed to make it in her role.

Finally, a trio of fascinating speakers from Birmingham City University impressed the students with their passion for fashion. Birmingham School of Jewelry’s Kate Thorley shared some of her designs; fashion undergrad Charlotte Carter talked about developing her design skills and portfolio, while fashion branding undergrad and artist Yavanica Sethi revealed how creativity helps build on the designers’ clothing creations to reach the market.

The students attending the event came from Arthur Terry, West Coventry Academy, John Willmott and five primary schools – Hill West, Scotch Orchard, St Chads, Two Gates and William MacGregor. At the end, they got the chance to mingle with the speakers and ask them questions. Jennifer Aitken, Headteacher at St Chads Primary School, said her students had been inspired by the event.

She said: “Our students were really engaged. One of our girls was inspired by Jaz’s story, the boys were hooked by the thought of getting into game design, and another student enjoyed looking through the fashion students’ portfolios.

“We look forward to similar events in the future!”

Easter in Reception

By Mrs. Lisa Pardo

Can you believe it's Easter already, because we can't!!

In Reception, the children were very excited to kick start their week of Easter activities. On Monday the children arrived full of excitement about the week ahead. Throughout the day, the children were rehearsing the Easter songs that they would be performing to parents and carers the following day. We were blown away with their singing and actions and were feeling very proud of their confidence and enthusiasm.

It was a big day on Tuesday because it was the day of our Easter bonnet parade and Easter lunch with a loved one. Our Reception children could not wait to show off their fantastic homemade Easter bonnets! Leading up to the event, there had been a lot of excited discussion within Robins and Wrens about how the bonnets had been made at home. The children chatted with animation about baby chicks, fresh flowers, ribbon and mini eggs. So the Early Years team were intrigued and could not wait to see the final creations! The day of the parade arrived. Both classes were so eager to show off their bonnets, and no wonder, the bonnets were fantastic! So much time and effort had been invested in to making them as magnificent as possible. They were a true reflection of the children's individual creativity. Not only did the children show off their bonnets in the parade, but they also blew the audience away with their Easter songs. We would like to thank the children and their parents for taking the time and effort to make such super bonnets.

After the magnificent parade the children made their way over to the dinner hall to greet their loved ones and share the most delicious Easter lunch. There were smiles all around as the children demonstrated how grown up and independent they have become during lunch time. The dinner hall was filled with happiness, love and some very cute fluffy chicks hiding on the Easter bonnets.

The children learnt about the Easter story and how Easter is celebrated. Children listened attentively to the Easter story and were able to talk about what traditions such as chocolate eggs actually represent.

On Thursday, the children got creative again and designed beautiful Easter cards for their family. The children used their finger prints to produce very cute chicks and added features with fine felt tips. After this, they wrote a 'Happy Easter' message to their loved ones inside.

The final day of the school term arrived and it wasn't a typical day. Instead it was the children's first ever Easter egg rolling day. Armed with their brightly decorated hard-boiled eggs, the children made their way up to the top of the hill on the school field. In small groups, they counted down before rolling their eggs down the hill. The children were cheering each other on and excited to see how far their friends' eggs had travelled. After a very exhilarating morning, the afternoon was filled with even more fun when the children buddied up with older children to join the whole school Easter egg hunt around our beautiful school grounds.

What a busy Easter week the children in Reception had. It was lovely to see their beaming smiles and hear them buzzing with excitement as they started celebrating Easter with new traditions in school. We hope you all had a wonderful Easter break and we look forward to many more fun learning activities this Summer term.



Year 1 – Balance-ability and PE

By Miss Sophie Beardmore

What is Balance-ability?

Balance-ability is the UK's first PE Approved Learn to Cycle programme for children aged 2½ years and upwards. The programme consists of structured session plans and other resources which are available to schools, leisure centres and local authorities.

Balance-ability combines unique ergonomic balance bikes with a schedule of fun activities that build confidence, spatial-awareness and dynamic balance skills, enabling young children to cycle without ever needing stabilisers. 94% of children aged 4 to 6 years old are able to safely ride a pedal bike at the end of the programme.

This spring term at Hill West, 20 children from Swifts and from Swallows participated in Balance-ability. The other children will be completing this in the summer term. The children were clipped into their safety helmets and then were excited to be issued with their balance bikes. Under the watchful eye of the instructor, they started to move with increased confidence around the playground. As the children enjoyed the fun challenge of riding around, little did they understand the fundamental motor skills they were building. Balance skills are intrinsic to promoting symmetry which will help children develop the basic skills for any future physical activity.



This half term in P.E., the children have been exploring striking and fielding using our new Scheme of Learning. But what does it entail?

Striking and fielding games are games where there are two teams, one, the batting team, try to score points and the other, the fielding team, try to stop the batting team from scoring. Examples of striking and fielding games include cricket and rounders. Alongside the physical activities, the children have also been learning the key vocabulary.

Vocabulary	Meaning
Striking	the harder you strike, the further the ball will travel.
Fielding	throwing the ball back is quicker than running with it
Throwing	use an overarm throw to throw over longer distances.
Catching	watch the ball as it comes towards you.
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Year 2 – 500 Word Story Competition

By Miss Kerry Lynch

Year 2 have had some amazing writers this year, who have entered some incredible stories into the 500-word competition. The team have thoroughly enjoyed reading them! So a big well done to all the children who entered, you should be very proud of yourselves.

After entering his story 'The Cheeky King' into the competition last autumn, we are very pleased to reveal that Kit Naylor, a Year 2 Kingfisher, has written one of the top 50 stories, which made it to the final of the nationwide 'BBC 500 Words' competition.

The competition, which receives thousands of stories from children across the UK, is split into 3 separate rounds of judging. During round one, volunteer judges read the thousands of entries and whittle the number down to 5000, which then progress to round two. From there, they are judged by official partners at 'The Reading Agency', who then submit the top 50.

Kit, at just 7 years old, was chosen because of his amazing story-telling talent.

The final round of judging was held at Buckingham Palace in early February, where the official judges discussed the stories. Kit and his mother were invited to attend an exciting grand event the palace. Kit was so thrilled!

Queen Camilla looked at his name tag and said to him, "Kit, you are amazing for being one of the top 50 children out of 44,000." She then asked him how he felt. Kit met lots of famous authors and comedians, like Sir Lenny Henry and even had the courage to tell him a joke. Kit asked him, "What did the policeman say to his tummy?" He paused and then finished with "Don't move, you are under a vest!" LENNY LAUGHED! Wonder if he will use that joke himself!

Whilst at the Palace, Kit and his mum enjoyed a very small, very fancy chocolate cake, which was very yummy and delicious.

On his return to school he was treated like celebrity in the Key Stage One assembly. The children enjoyed watching him on the BBC news, where he had been interviewed by Nick Owen before he travelled down to London. Kit was so confident and proud as he told Nick about his story 'The Cheeky King' during his T.V. interview.

Miss Lynch read his story out loud to all the children, who were mesmerised by the story and could not stop laughing at all the funny bits. They all agreed he should publish his story!

His teachers and friends are so very proud of him and look forward to his first novel.



'The Cheeky King' by Kit Naylor

One sunny day the King of England was feeling a little bit silly.

First of all he had just one very cheeky thought.

Then he had three slightly cheekier thoughts.

Then, before he knew it, he had hundreds of extraordinarily cheeky thoughts.

So, he chose the cheekiest three thoughts and set off on a mission to complete them all, one by one ...

First of all he went to his dressing room and decided to dress up in disguise. He decided to dress up as a little old lady so that nobody would know it was him.

He put on a long curly blond wig (which tickled his nose a bit and made him sneeze), some shiny orange lipstick, a big red flowery dress (which was a little bit breezy) and some bright yellow wellies.

He was ready and very excited. So, he set off with a very cheeky grin on his face.

His first idea was to hang sausages aaaall over the London eye. It was a slippery and time-consuming mission. Hundreds of dogs came from far and wide, sniffing, snorting and licking the big sausage lollypop as it slowly continued to turn.

His second idea was to change some of the times on the train timetables at London Euston train station. He had to wait until nobody was looking then break into the train station control room first. He used his very special king's key to open the door and pressed as many buttons on the main computer as he could before leaving and locking the door behind him.

His third idea was to do a gigantic trump through a school classroom window. The trump was loud and squeaky and sounded just like a deflating balloon. All the children laughed. Even the teacher laughed so hard she fell off her chair.

After such a busy day the king felt very tired and wanted to go home so he asked his bodyguard to give him a piggyback all the way back to Buckingham palace.

When he got there, he changed into his soft, spotty Pyjamas and had a nice hot cup of tea with one digestive biscuit.

Then he settled down to watch the news on television. - He couldn't quite believe the cheeky commotion across London. Even the news reader was laughing his head off.

First he did one small cheeky chuckle.

Then he did three even bigger cheeky giggles.

Then he laughed so much he couldn't eat any of his dinner.

Then he laughed so much he couldn't brush his teeth.

Then he giggled and chuckled all the way up to bed.

He fell asleep giggling and dreamed about new cheeky ideas all night long.

What a cheeky, cheeky King. – I wonder what he will do next...



Year 3 – Science Week

By Mr. David Parkin

British Science Week is a 10-day celebration of all things scientific and this year was celebrated between the 8th and 17th March. The week is celebrated annually, with a key aim of raising awareness, sparking enthusiasm and celebrating science, technology, engineering and maths with people of all ages and from all walks of life. Science is a subject that brings learning to life at Hill West through a wonderful progressive curriculum, where the children learn important scientific concepts and experience a range of practical activities.

In Year 3, science lessons are always a highlight of the week with the children having the opportunity to participate in the topics of rocks, animals including humans, forces and light so far this academic year. This year's science week provided further opportunity for enthusiasm towards science and to enhance passions for a wonderful, wide-ranging subject.

To celebrate Science Week this year, each year group had the opportunity to take part in a live lesson set up by the NFU. For Year 3, the lesson was titled 'A day in the life of a farm vet'. The lesson did not disappoint, with an engrossing interactive experience supporting the children to learn not only about a purposeful scientific career path, but also how a farm runs day-to-day. The session was introduced with the point that no two days as a farm vet are the same, with it being a busy job full of emergency situations. The children were able to gain an insight for themselves into this, with the very informative vet showing them a health check on a cow and how modern technology is enhancing farming and supporting farmers to ensure the health and wellbeing of their animals is at the forefront. Finally, the children watched in amazement as a camera showed the live birth of a calf, with the vet explaining what was happening. The impact of the live lesson was clear to see, with children gaining new knowledge and insights into a scientific career path. One child commented that they hoped to pursue a career in farming having been fascinated by what they had seen.

Science week also provided the chance for Year 3 to look closely at shadows, as part of the topic on light. Previously, the children have been learning about light including different light sources, as well as darkness. The children were able to build on their previous learning by understanding that shadows are formed when the path of the light is blocked by an opaque object, creating an area of darkness behind it. Science in Year 3 is always purposeful and fun, with there being no better way for children to learn scientifically than exploring and seeing it for themselves. The children were able to have a go at forming shadows using objects and torches, as well as participating in a game where they observed a shadow and worked together to establish with what object the shadow had been created.

It is evident that British Science Week does a wonderful job in promoting a love and passion for science across the UK, with this being no different at Hill West. Science Week 2024 has further sparked enthusiasm in school for such a wonderful subject, with it being pleasing to see so many young and aspirational scientists of the future.

We all wait in anticipation for what Science week 2025 will have in store!



Year 4 – Whitemoor Lakes

By Ms. Clare Whelan



Whitemore Lakes was an amazing adventure for all this year. After excitedly boarding the coach outside school, we arrived just before lunch and were introduced to the rooms where we would be staying for the next two nights. Everyone was buzzing with anticipation at this time! The children were asked to put their own bed covers on; a request met with shocked but determined faces. The children took this in their stride, smashing their first task of the day! Afterwards they ate their lunches, which had been lovingly packed by their parents.



Once the children were settled in their rooms, they went to their first physical activity. The bravery on this windy evening was admirable, the conditions did not deter our children. They persisted with clambering up and abseiling down the climbing walls. Some braver souls even participated in the daring feats of the Leap of Faith, whilst others navigated assault courses amongst many other tasks. After tea, everyone went on a hike around the lake. There were beets everywhere due to the recent floods, which had caused them to wash over from the neighbouring farm's field. This made the terrain underfoot tricky especially in the dark. However, the children surmounted this final task of the day with resilience and positivity.



The next two days were packed with a variety of adventurous activities, where we watched our children read a map and use a compass to guide them to a destination; guided them through the complex puzzles that formed an escape room; and helped them built a device to support an egg which was dropped from a great height. All this was such a delight to see: our children are truly **ambitious, curious and ever-respectful**.

Even at bedtime our children settled down beautifully; all the teachers were grateful to get a good seven hours sleep each night. Some of the wonderful memories include a most amazing sunset over the lake and singing around the campfire whilst eating marshmallows. Watching our children sit together at mealtimes and regale each other with tales of phobias and fears overcome, was a wonderful sight, as was watching them share jokes that had made the laugh during the day. Mostly, it was fabulous to see the camaraderie and enthusiasm expressed by our children.



It has been a pleasure to see a different side to their personalities. I know every child has taken home a new lesson, skill, or their confidence had been boosted by this truly remarkable experience. Lifelong friendships have been forged; our children will remember this adventure for many years to come.



Year 5 – Mental Health Week

By Mr. Adam Henrick

In Year 5, and across Hill West, Mental Health Week 2024 brought with it an empowering theme: "My Voice Matters." This year's focus on amplifying children's voices and promoting mental well-being was met with enthusiasm and creativity. With the support of the Cherished charity, our children engaged in various activities aimed at fostering self-expression, empathy, and emotional regulation.



One of the highlights of Mental Health Week was the interactive workshop conducted by the Cherished charity. Through engaging discussions and activities, the children learned the importance of their voices in shaping their own well-being and the world around them. They explored the concept of advocacy and the power of speaking up for themselves and others.

A particularly memorable activity during the week was the creation of acrostic poems. Each child reflected on what their voice meant to them personally, expressing their thoughts and feelings in poetic form. These poems served as powerful reminders of the uniqueness and significance of each child's voice. Moreover, the children were challenged to provide advice for hypothetical scenarios, promoting empathy and problem-solving skills. By putting themselves in others' shoes and offering support and guidance, they not only honed their communication skills but also fostered a culture of understanding and compassion.



The culmination of the week's activities was the decoration of a symbolic microphone. Each child personalized their microphone with colourful mouths, representing the unique perspectives and contributions they bring to the world. This visual representation served as a tangible reminder of the value of their voices and the impact they can make when they speak up.

Throughout Mental Health Week, the children were encouraged to affirm the importance of their voices through constant affirmation. By repeating phrases such as "My Voice Matters," they internalised the belief in their own worth and agency, fostering confidence and self-assurance. In addition to promoting self-expression and advocacy, Mental Health Week also provided valuable lessons in emotional regulation.



Through the exploration of the Zones of Regulation, our children learned to identify and manage their emotions effectively. They were equipped with tools and strategies to help them stay grounded and balanced, contributing to their overall well-being. As Mental Health Week 2024 came to a close, the impact of the activities and discussions was evident in the children's increased sense of self-awareness and empowerment. By recognizing the importance of their voices and embracing the tools to support their mental well-being, these young individuals emerged stronger and more resilient, ready to navigate the complexities of life with confidence and compassion.

Year 6 – Trip to France

By Mrs Alison Downes



Early on a crisp Friday morning in February, our forty year 6 pupils gathered to board the coach bound for France. Excited chatter and tangible nerves were in the air as they said 'Goodbye' to loved ones and 'Bonjour!' to our coach driver Gareth, who would be driving us for the next four days.

After a fairly smooth journey (bumps courtesy of the English channel), the coach soon turned a corner and year 6 set eyes on the beautiful chateau, where we would be staying. They were immediately whisked off for a tour of the property, shown their dormitories and practiced a fire drill. In the splendid dining hall, a delicious dinner of chicken and pasta awaited us and the children devoured it hungrily. There was even a real French éclair for pudding.

Though Saturday dawned a little dull, it did not dampen the spirits of the young explorers, who were ready to learn about the local town of Rue and were eager to use the French they had been learning in class. After a delicious breakfast of croissants and tea, we all headed off led by the French hosts, who were experts in their knowledge of the town.



Though small, Rue is steeped in history and year 6 learned about everything from where the town's salty treasures were once stored to why one of the gargoyles on the Basilica looks towards Paris. After the tour, everyone enjoyed the street market and local boulangerie, where the children were able to try out the French phrases they had practiced to buy baguettes!

In the afternoon, we visited the ever wonderful chocolate workshop, where our chocolatier expert guide created mouthwatering treats right before our eyes. He explained the difference between milk, dark and white chocolate and showed us how Easter eggs are formed. We were able to taste the chocolates and then buy some to take home from the shop.



Tired after a busy day, the children enjoyed after dinner activities of boules and volleyball, before retiring to their dormitories for some downtime before bed.

Sunday started with more tasty croissants, after which we headed to the local town of Albert to explore the museum - a fascinating underground museum, where we could see the ordinary, everyday items left in the local fields by soldiers after the war had ended. There were reconstructions of the trenches and the soldiers in uniforms with their weapons. They were a sombre sight and gave us a chance to fully appreciate the tough conditions of the trenches and the burden of heavy equipment that soldiers had to contend with aside from the actual fighting.

The afternoon included a trip to the fascinating Lochnagar crater, where we witnessed the effects of skilled Welsh miners and 27 tonnes of explosives. We then headed to the British memorial arch, which can be seen for miles around and where the names of 72,000 lost soldiers are etched to remember their sacrifice.

Finally our very knowledgeable tour guide took us to some real trenches at the Canadian Newfoundland Memorial site. There we could begin to comprehend how the trenches were laid out and the landscape in which they were dug.

A welcome and warming French stew awaited us back at the chateau – along with some escargot for those brave enough to try them. The children then enjoyed an energetic evening playing games in the hall, before packing and heading for bed.

The final morning dawned early as we prepared for our journey home. We were sad to leave Rue, the chateau and the memories we had made, but excited to be reunited with loved ones.



Sports at Hill West

By Miss Sophie Beardmore

As well as sourcing a new curriculum for Physical Education (P.E.), our sports teams have received some exciting rebranding too - with new kits!

Our netball team has had a new netball kit thanks to our sponsors at Mobile Services Ltd. We owe a huge thank you to Kelly Boulton (Year 2 parent) for making it happen. The girls delightedly wore their new dresses for their first league matches and they looked incredible. They began the season with a win against Coppice Primary School 18 -5 and then played a tough match against a strong Boldmere side, which resulted in a 11 – 14 score.



Our Girls and Boys football teams will all have new kits ready for matches over the Spring and Summer term. In the photo, our boys pose proudly in their new team kits.



Our boys football team was picked to represent Sutton Coldfield in the West Midlands Under 11 Inter Schools Seven Aside County Finals 2023-24. They displayed really resilience and sportsmanship during their matches and came an amazing 3rd out of the big schools category.

Both our girls and boys team have made a fantastic start to our football season against some strong sides.



Boys Team	Girls Team
Boldmere 2 – Hill West 4	Little Sutton 8 – Hill West 2
Little Sutton 2 – Hill West 2	Walmley 1 – Hill West 9
Walmley 1 – Hill West 4	New Oscott 0 – Hill West 6
New Oscott 3 – Hill West 1	

Our PTFA have very kindly sponsored our Athletics Kit, which was ordered before the February Half term. Here is our design.

