



# THE HILL WEST HERALD

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## Message from the Head Teacher

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Change, change and more change. As you are aware, over the past few years there have been monumental changes to the educational landscape and with this the expectations on teachers and on pupils has shifted significantly. Often these changes have been made by the Department of Education without a significant lead in time for schools or their staff and as such we have had to be quick to respond and review our day-to-day practices. As we reach the end of this school year, I thought it may be pertinent to reflect on some of the most significant changes to the primary school curriculum and indeed the tests children have sat in Year 2 and Year 6. Within the last two years:

A brand new National Curriculum has been introduced into all primary schools which is considerably more challenging than the previous one and presents the most significant issues for children in upper Key Stage 2 who have been taught against the old curriculum for the majority of their schooling to date. The use of 'levels' was abolished and all schools were expected to establish their own assessment system. Brand new SATs tests were introduced this year into Year 2 and Year 6 and this included a new arithmetic test. The children in KS2 had not been given the necessary time to study for these tests as the tests are designed to assess a curriculum that has been taught over four years. The tests were made much harder this year and a scaled score of 100 has been introduced to denote the new 'Met' standard. The new interim assessment criteria to moderate against had mixed instructions for how it was to be used and these instructions varied depending on which Local Authority you worked in.

This obviously meant that, despite their hard work and talent, some children did not reach the standards that they were expecting (Met or Greater Depth) in the key stage tests. Please do not see this as any fault on the part of either your child or their teacher: rather, it is the outcome of changes to the national curriculum and a resetting of the expected standard. It is not just that the results are not comparable to those in previous years. The bar has been raised so high that it may seem that your child has not made the progress you were anticipating. This is of course, demoralizing for children, parents and teachers alike. Trust me, our children have done an amazing job given the pressures and stress that they have faced and the expectations placed upon them at such a young age. Teachers have also done all that they can to try to achieve the *unrealistic* in a short space of time.

But our children are much more than an outcome on a test. They are enthusiastic, loving, happy, thoughtful and kind. They are resilient, empathetic, supportive of each other and funny! I love my job and feel extremely privileged to be able to say that. I hope you all have an amazing summer holiday and I wish our Year 6 pupils all the very best for their future. We will miss each and every one of you.

## ATLP News: the Outstanding in Education Awards

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More than 100 outstanding staff and other guests from the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership came together on Thursday 16 June 2016 for the second 'Outstanding in Education Awards'. Hosted at Sutton Coldfield's prestigious New Hall Hotel, the evening event featured a dinner and prize giving and the opportunity for guests to meet up with colleagues from across the partnership. The awards recognise and celebrate the outstanding contribution staff make to their learning communities. Shortlisted nominees from Arthur Terry, Coleshill, Stockland Green, Brookvale, Hill West, Mere Green and Slade schools, had been put forward by their colleagues in a range of categories. The ceremony began with an introduction by Tim Sewell, Chair of the ATLP Trust Board, who applauded the *"immense contribution that the partnership has on the lives of children."* He added: *"Together we are really making a difference with our activities."*

Nominating just a hand-full of our staff from Hill West was probably the most difficult task. As you will know we have a great team here and could have had multiple nominees in each category. However, a representative group of staff made a decision on the final nominations and their testimonials are here for you to read.

### **Julie Durkin and Jane Thompson**

Committed, altruistic, flexible, patient and hard-working are but a few words that come to mind when describing our wonderful team of Lunchtime Learning Mentors. As a strong, cohesive and like-minded duo, they play an integral role in the support and development of our pupils every day. Overseeing the supervision of our pupils during lunchtimes, Julie and Jane work tirelessly to ensure the smooth running of lunch arrangements, expertly managing the movement of children so as to ensure they have an enjoyable lunchtime each day. Together they devise a range of engaging activities and games for our children, playing along to promote inclusion of all pupils and helping to develop secure friendships. Both Julie and Jane manage the behaviour of our children brilliantly and help resolve conflicts by encouraging and mentoring children to understand how to 'do the right thing.' They are kind-hearted and nurturing when our children have accidents and make sure that the teachers and parents alike are well-informed of the care their child has received. Both Jane and Julie have worked to develop a team of highly skilled lunchtime supervisors, delivering personalised training sessions that show their commitment to the continual professional development of their team. In addition to the superb work they do at lunchtimes, Julie and Jane also work with individual children across the school who have additional social, emotional or educational needs. They have gone above and beyond what is expected of them in this area, getting to know these children and their specific needs in depth to ensure each day is a successful one.



## **Sarah Terry**

It is with great pleasure that we nominate Mrs. Sarah Terry for this award in recognition of her outstanding leadership skills. Since joining Hill West over two-years ago, Sarah has made a significant contribution - be it through the skillful development of a new maths curriculum; the tailored and continued professional development of staff; or the improvement of teaching and learning in mathematics as a result of her personalised mentoring and support. Sarah has established herself as an inspirational leader with staff and has grown, and continues to do so, in her role today. Volunteering her expertise to lead in the area of maths, Sarah has demonstrated a plethora of leadership skills. She regularly imparts her knowledge, wisdom and passion for mathematics by expertly supporting and facilitating staff to become better practitioners through an approachable and coaching leadership. In doing so, she has become intuitively responsive to the evolving needs of the school, staff and children. Sarah has built effective relationships with colleagues founded on mutual respect and her ability to communicate initiatives is superb. More recently, Sarah has been integral in developing a strategic direction for a 'Year of Maths' and is currently collaborating with, leading and supporting colleagues to embed a shared vision for numeracy. We are delighted that Sarah can be nominated for this accolade as she shows enormous potential as a leader of the future. We look forward to nurturing her in her

## **Harry Britton**

Having overcome his own personal challenges Harry is an inspiration to children and staff alike. Always wanting to become a Teacher, Harry knew and was determined to overcome his crippling stammer. Four years ago before embarking on his chosen career path Harry attended the McGuire Speech Programme. This taught him strategies to control his stammer and Harry's confidence grew and grew allowing him for the first time to realise that teaching could be a realistic ambition. In Interview Harry wowed us all with his honesty and courage as well as his passion and skill. We knew immediately that we wanted him to join the staff at Hill West. Harry has had a fantastic first year at school. Harry has worked extremely hard and deserves the award for the outstanding new employee. He is a dynamic member of staff. As an NQT Harry has demonstrated his excellent interpersonal skills. He has built excellent relationships with all members of staff as well as children and parents. Harry is able to plan and deliver outstanding lessons and always adapts his lessons to the needs of his learners. Harry has created a learning environment which is calm, respectful, exciting and engaging to enable all children to learn. It has been a pleasure to see Harry grow in confidence this year and I know that he will continue to make a big impact upon all that he teaches in the future too with his clear passion and enthusiasm for teaching and helping children learn.

## **Leanne Bowkett**

This year has seen Leanne leave Hill West temporarily and base herself at Arthur Terry where our Year 5 children have been taught all year. The early starts to the school day and changes in routine have all been taken in her stride. Throughout this difficult time, isolated for the rest of the Hill West staff, Leanne has remained wholly positive and highly professional. Leanne is a dynamic and creative teaching assistant who demonstrates excellent practice at all times. Leanne works superbly within the Year 5 team, taking direction from the class teachers; using her initiative to independently assess, plan and deliver lessons and, more recently has led our school Quiz team (regularly coaching the children in her lunchtimes) to develop their general knowledge so that they can compete in regional competitions. Leanne is completely dedicated and committed to the success of every pupil she works with and goes above and beyond the daily practice of a teaching assistant. Her lessons are always creative, personalised and reflect the children's interests, motivating and inspiring children to become better in their learning. In addition to her work in class as a teaching assistant, Leanne has also shown her commitment to improving our school by developing her role as Autism Lead Practitioner. She has worked with external agencies and colleagues across the partnership to share best practice and has disseminated this knowledge with our staff to support their understanding of the diverse needs of children with a diagnosis of autism.



### **Rachael Evans**

Rachael is a dynamic, creative and dedicated teacher who has made an outstanding impact on pupil progress and the school community over the last year since joining us at Hill West. Rachael is an exceptional Early Years specialist teacher who motivates and excites the children in her care. Passionate, hard-working, determined, reflective and forthright are just some of the words that spring to mind when thinking about Rachael. Rachael leads a strong Early Years team who consistently use resources imaginatively to involve children in exciting learning experiences, whether that be 'catching a robber' or 'pretending to be dragon slayer'. Rachael leads by example and always ensures her practice is exemplary. The children love her and thrive in her care. She is able to adapt her teaching approaches and styles to be fully inclusive and has planned for children with a development stage/age of 16 – 22 months alongside those at 40 – 60 months. To do this successfully takes much skill but also a total commitment to the success of each individual child. Rachael treats every child as though it were one of her own. Most weekends Rachael can be found in Pound Land or Wilkinsons buying items to excite the learning the next week (shaving foam, straws, oil, flour, glitter). Rachael has developed excellent relationships with parents and carers this year and all of them without exception rate her as an Outstanding teacher. In her free time Rachael loves to run; this means that physical development this year in Reception has been a doddle. You will often find Rachael, followed by 30 little people running at speed across our school field pretending that the Gruffalo is chasing them.

### **Karen Balla**

Karen has worked at Hill West Primary school since 1995 when she joined the Infant School as the school secretary. Karen began her career working 19 hours a week. At that time she was the only office employee and managed the school systems entirely on her own. By the year 2000 Karen was working full time and was also looking to grow the office personnel as the workload and school accountability was increasing. During this time Karen was also a member of Hill West's PTFA and spent many hours planning and manning fun events for children in school. Soon Karen joined the Infant Governing Body and supported the school through the process of amalgamation sitting on the joint interim Governing Body up until September 2004. This was an extremely difficult time for the school as the largely successful Infant school joined forces with the less successful Junior School and Karen had to say goodbye to a very well respected and much loved Infant Head Teacher. Since amalgamation Karen has grown the office team considerably. She now line-manages three excellent administrative assistants and a highly efficient and effective office manager as well as all of our before and after school club workers and lunchtime supervisors. Karen is a highly committed manager who really champions our school and believes that we all have the capacity to be outstanding. Her commitment to her work, those that she works alongside and the school population and its wider community over the last 21 years has to be commended.

### **Ian Scrivens**

Ian Scrivens joined our school workforce in 2014. He was employed as a teaching assistant specifically to support our children with the most significant learning challenges. Since joining us he has worked with children with a diagnosis of Autism and children with a diagnosis of Global Development Delay. Not satisfied with supporting these children in class with their learning and progress Ian decided to introduce a family of ducks and chickens to our school. Mr Scrivens knew that whether it was Maths ("how much food do we need to feed an Indian running duck for one week?") or Science, ("what comes first the chicken or the egg?") or Geography ("what part of the world do our chickens come from?") or Grammar ("what words would we use to describe our drake?") our children approach their learning in these subjects with a new enthusiasm and interest. Mr Scrivens knew of studies that showed that children often turn to pets for emotional well-being, with 40% of children choosing pet companionship when feeling down. Children are also found to seek out pets/animals when feeling tired, upset, scared or lonely. This has proven to be true in our school where our Autistic children are often found in the duck/chicken paddock caring for our animals. Mr Scrivens has recognized that learning to care for our chickens and ducks has given the children he works with a real sense of responsibility and achievement. This is when they really excel. Mr Scrivens is so committed he looks after our ducks and chickens every weekend and throughout EVERY school holiday. He has made a real difference to all of our children but especially to those facing the most significant challenges in school every day.



## Rebecca Waldron

Rebecca has been part of the school office team since March 2014 and in that time has grown from Administrative Assistant to Office Manager. Alongside her Office Manager role she has taken responsibility for publicising the school and school events to parents the general public and has been instrumental in raising the school's public profile. She issues a termly publication "The Hill West Herald" for which Rebecca collects articles from members of staff about events held in school, educational visits children and staff have been on and sporting events we have taken part in. However, she goes further than that - Rebecca has persuaded members of staff to write articles about their hobbies and activities, such as playing rugby, playing in a brass band enabling parents to get an insight into the lives of staff working with their children. Rebecca works tirelessly to promote the school through articles in the Sutton Coldfield News and produced a "Hill West in the News" book for our entrance table showing these articles to our parents. As well as publicity Rebecca has worked on forging links with businesses and companies through our parents and in the local community. She already has a strong relationship with B&Q at Wednesbury who have agreed to provide the school with gardening equipment, compost and plants and has plans to link with other local businesses to gain publicity both for the school and for the business but also to bring services or resources into the

## Diane Hardeman

Diane joined Hill West Junior School, as it was then in 1991, and was a highly respected and much valued member of staff until the end of the Autumn Term this year. After 25 years of service to our school Diane decided that it was sadly time to retire. She wanted to spend more time with her aging parents and of course her much loved husband Bill. Not only was Diane an outstanding teaching assistant but she was wholly committed to improving the life chances of every child. As such she led the schools work on aspirations and careers and reached out to those children who otherwise may not have seen a place for themselves in the world of work. She ran careers fairs at school and held open days where ex-students were invited back into school to join our 'wall of fame'. Her work however extended beyond the school gates as she championed improving the lives of children across the world. Her fund-raising events saw her single-handedly raise over £6000 for causes such as Oxfam, Childreach International and UNICEF. She taught our children about the Convention on the Rights of the Child and helped the whole school community to lobby parliament to ensure every child, across the world, is able to attend school. Each year, natural disasters affect 175 million children and disrupt their schooling. Last year in **Nepal** one million children were left out of school after two massive earthquakes destroyed 35,000 schools and 600,000 homes. Apart from wars and natural disasters other emergencies are keeping children from their basic right to an education. In **Sierra Leone** nearly 2 million children were forced to abandon school because of Ebola. And in northern **Nigeria** the violence from Boko Haram has displaced 1.4 million children from their homes and destroyed 900 schools. Diane made sure our children were aware of the plight of others and were empowered to come together to do something positive about it.



## Year 5 trip Cluster Day

By Mrs Bowkett — Teaching Assistant

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On Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June, the Year 5 children from all the schools in the Four Oaks cluster got together to take part in the annual cluster day, which this year took place at Arthur Terry school.

The theme of this year's activities was 'Great Britain' and all the activities centred around what it means to be British. The children took part in three exciting lessons - humanities, music and history.

For Hill West children, the day began with a music lesson. Using a variety of instruments, the children gradually built up the music, chanting the names of foods to help keep a steady beat. These included fish, chips, coffee and Babybel! It was a lot of fun.

Following this, they had a History lesson, studying the soldiers who fought for the British Army during the First World War. The children were surprised to learn that there were many soldiers from all over the British Empire who fought for Britain. They came from far away countries, such as India, The Caribbean, Africa, Newfoundland and Nepal. It was interesting to discover more about these soldiers, their different uniforms and cultures. They then designed a medal, showing all the cultures and skills of the soldiers.

Next stop was a picnic lunch on the school field and a chance to meet up with and make friends from the other schools in the cluster. The sun even made an appearance and they spent an enjoyable hour eating and playing together.



The final lesson of the day was all about British values and what it means to be British. The children made a collage of pictures, signs, logos and activities to represent British life and what it means to be a 'great Briton'.

They all worked extremely hard and were complimented on their excellent behaviour and enthusiasm in lessons. Well done Year 5!

## Year 4 Camping on the field

Jenny Robinson—Year 4 Class Teacher

**O**n Tuesday, 5th May, Year 4 were given the opportunity to camp on the school field. Although groans resonated through the teaching staff (the thought of a sleepless night) the children were awash with excited cheers. Soon they would experience a night hanging out with friends, which was to include a copious amount of sweets.



On Tuesday morning children hurried into their classrooms—many with bags that were larger than themselves. They had wide grins on their faces and were eager to begin their adventure. To set the scene, we allowed children to watch some scenes from Bear Grylls where he would climb mountains and sail rivers in order to survive. We were quick to explain to the children that this would not be their experience and that we would in fact be ordering Dominoes pizza that evening. At this, their excitement grew further.



Our day really kicked off when we were given the responsibility, after an in-depth coaching session by our PTFA member, to put up our tents. Soon, they were all done and we were ready for a day of outdoor learning. The activities flew by throughout our day and by the time pizza arrived we were all ready for bed. By all, I do mean the teachers.

Night time quickly approached us and soon all the children were tucked away in their tent, with some 'winding down' activities. As twilight appeared, the field was only occupied by patrolling teachers—although, voices from the tents still lurked in the air.



Finally, most of the children drifted off to sleep and the teachers found rest—however short lived. At 6am, the chirping of children in their tents awoke us once more and we were ready for another day of fun!

## Summer Fayre

By Mrs Pick and Mrs Scandrett—Teaching Assistants

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On the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2016, Hill West Primary School held an Olympic themed summer fayre. As usual, we were overwhelmed by the fantastic support of the children, parents and staff.

Despite the weather, it was a lovely day which ran smoothly.

In keeping with the Hill West tradition there was a wide range of fun filled activities for both children and adults.

These included tug of war, tombola, raffle and stalls selling a variety of food, drink and delicious cakes. The children were particularly attracted to the inflatable slide, the inflatable run and the tombola. Parents enjoyed the BBQ area whilst our multi talented children dazzled us with their performances, some of which included Haka, cheerleading, maypole dancing and sign language singing.



*The inflatable slide was a popular choice for the young children*



*The tombola displayed the generosity of our pupils and parents*



*Hill West show the England team how to take a penalty*

The summer fayre helped us raise an amazing

**£3132**

which will help to support our school and pupils in many ways.

A big thank you goes out to all , including PTFA, who supported this event by giving their valuable time, money and donations to make this event an on going success. We hope you all have a fantastic, well deserved summer break and we look forward to seeing you at all of our PTFA events in the new school year.



*Mr Lackenby mopping up after a short sharp shower*



*Year 2 performing the legendary maypole dance*

*Our Year 6, doing their bit to raise money for Hill West*



## Spring Musical Evening

By Lara Jones—Class Teacher

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It was that time of year again, Spring was in the air and the children of Hill West were ready to wow their parents and teachers.

The stage was set and the hall was packed with over one hundred parents and family members and all of the musicians were ready and waiting.

The evening began with the fabulous choir who kick-started with a punchy number 'The Eye of the Tiger' from the Rocky series of films.

This song featured Rebecca Mason and Myla Brookes who sang and danced to make it a super performance.

We then moved onto the first soloists- our amazing woodwind! The clarinets and flutes performed solos, duets and trios and blew us away with melodies such as 'Eidlweiss' from 'The Sound of Music'. Well done woodwind!

It was then time to invite the choir back to the stage to perform a Latin piece written by Karl Jenkins called 'Adiemus'. The children performed it brilliantly with inspiration for movement taken from this year's Britain's Got Talent!

Then it was time for a piano solo by Joshua Koshy. He played Lullaby beautifully showing great character and technique on the piano.



We were then entertained by our many guitarists and their teacher. They played a lively mix of well-known pop songs including 'Crazy little thing called love'. The guitarists also showed their improvisation skills and finished with a finale of a Spanish flamenco.



Then it was back to the choir who performed an emotional rendition of Nathan Syke's 'Over and Over Again'. They sang sweetly and passionately and there wasn't a dry eye in the house.



We then turned to the violins for our last instrumental performances of the night. There was a range of children from Year 1 to Year 6, all show-casing their talents individually and in groups. Fantastic playing!



It was then left for the choir to close the evening with one of their favourite songs written by Jessie J- 'Price Tag'. It featured Ruth Nampewo, Myla Bookes, Emily Peasland and Morenike Ogundare as soloists and they sang with big smiles and pure enjoyment.

What a super evening for all of our musicians at Hill West and a proud one for all the family members who came. Music is definitely getting bigger and better—I can't wait for next year!

# Hill West's Year of Maths

By Sarah Terry—Class Teacher

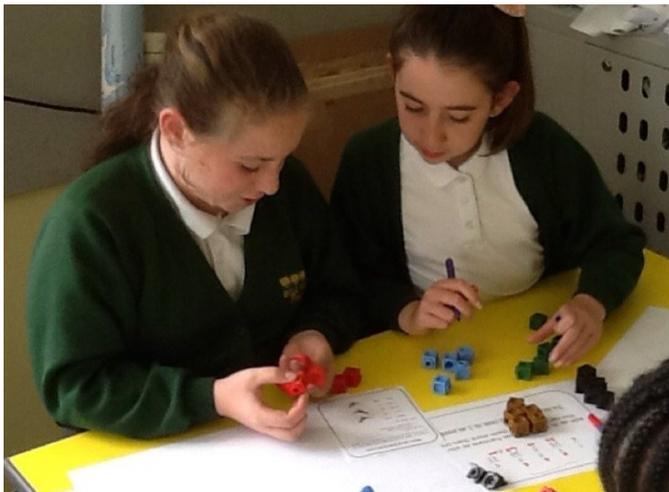
Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016 saw the launch of the Year of Maths at Hill West Primary School, fronted by Mrs Terry and Miss Hyde along with the support of Shane Walsh, an independent educational maths consultant. What is meant by the Year of Maths? You may ask. Well, let me explain it all...

After a successful year focusing on reading at our school from February 2015 to February 2016 and watching children's achievements in reading rocket sky-high, the staff at Hill West decided to repeat the same success with maths. The intention of our Year of Maths is to raise the profile of maths in our school. Not content with daily maths lessons, the staff at Hill West have decided to incorporate maths into every situation possible, whether that be other lessons across the curriculum (for example creating charts and graphs to present results in science, measuring amounts of wood to use in DT and counting syllables when writing poetry) maths brain teasers to start the day or planning the maths involved in school trips (for example how many tents will be needed for a camping trip) to name but a few.

During the Year of Maths, our aim is to promote children's love of learning, provide them with essential maths skills to utilise outside of school, and most of all, raise the achievements of pupils. This can only be done if the event is supported wholly by staff, parents and governors. The staff at Hill West have certainly taken a liking to the fresh, innovative ways to approach maths within our school and are incredibly excited about the new strategies they have to implement in the classroom (more about that later, though). The governors seemed very impressed when Mrs Terry and Miss Hyde presented the intentions of the Year of Maths at a governor meeting following its launch, along with some examples of activities which had started to be used in classrooms. What are these strategies I keep mentioning? Well, they're related to the three areas of maths set out by the 2014 National Curriculum – fluency, reasoning and problem-solving. Here is a whistle-stop tour...

Fluency is the first step in becoming a successful mathematician. One of the three aims of the National curriculum states that pupils will: *become fluent in the fundamentals of mathematics so that pupils develop conceptual understanding and the ability to recall and apply knowledge rapidly and accurately. In short, have a secure understanding of mathematical facts to apply to their learning.*

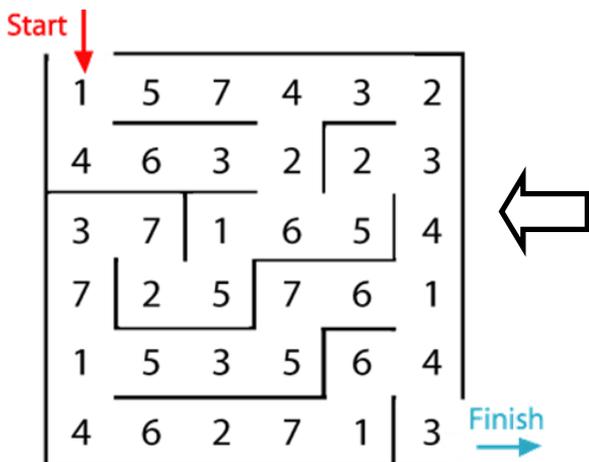
Contrary to popular belief, fluency in maths is not all about number – there are many more areas of maths which contain facts for children to retain and recall rapidly (for example, having a secure understanding of the properties of shapes).



Some fluency activities which have been introduced into classrooms following staff training include 'snap' using a deck of cards. This game can be played by adding, subtracting or multiplying two cards together. Times table bingo is another favourite of our staff. If you would like to know more about games and activities that you can complete at home, then don't hesitate to ask your child's teacher.

Reasoning in maths is the application of logical thinking to make sense of an idea: it enables children to make use of all their other mathematical sense. Justifying and explaining ideas are important aspects of maths. As part of our Year of Maths, the staff at Hill West have worked hard during training sessions to develop the reasoning activities used in the classroom and share them with other staff.

Here's an example of a reasoning activity:



As you pass through numbers in the maze, add them to create a total when you pass the finish line. How can you ensure that you achieve the highest total possible?

The third area of maths which staff are dedicated to improving is problem-solving. This requires children to think strategically, deciding which steps to take to solve a problem.

1 - 2 - 3 Magic Square

Arrange three 1s, three 2s and three 3s in this square so that every row, column and diagonal adds to the same total.


1   1   1   2   2   2   3   3   3

A task such as this requires children to use the mathematical facts they know, decide upon a starting point and review their strategies.

A term into our Year of Maths, we are already seeing results of the hard work of the staff, not only in the assessments carried out in the Summer term, but in children's views of maths. Recently, Mrs Terry and Miss Hyde spoke to children across the school to gain their insight into maths and their responses were phenomenal. Many children explain they enjoy maths because of the challenges it provides, all children could explain their favourite area of maths and why, and a large proportion of children could give reasons why we need maths in real life (for example, going shopping).

Our Year of Maths will continue in September with the review of our calculation policy and more training for staff. As always, we'll keep you up to date with exciting maths events at our school.

## Year 6 Leavers' Production

By Mr Steven George—Class Teacher

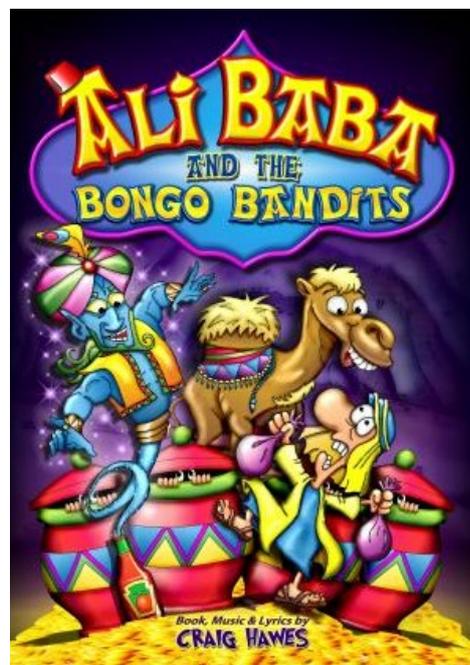
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As time has passed and stressed teachers have needed a worthwhile, engaging activity in the last few weeks of primary school, the leaver's production has evolved into the year six post-SATs swansong. As such, it has to be right – be professional – suit the 'characters' of the year group – fit in with their eccentricities let's say ... so ...

After much deliberation and the odd heated debate, year 6 (under threat of death) made the decision to run with the off-the-shelf production *Ali Baba and the Bongo Bandits* – a rip-roaring parody of the ancient tale of the forty thieves.

Time pressing, fervent auditions were conducted; (brave) soloists sang, actors acted with great aplomb and parts (and the proverbial die) were cast.

Scripts distributed, rehearsals began in earnest. After a shaky start and much (laboured) practise of comedy timing, followed by a last-minute hall change, the stage was set (pun intended).



Dress-rehearsals were a little underwhelming – the audience of children not really understanding the ‘dad jokes’ aimed at the adults – the one gag they really liked though was when the Sultan needed ‘Apu and Aliek’ (sic).

However, the two parents’ performances were a triumph – a magnificent demonstration of creativity and teamwork – a swansong worthy of the Royal Ballet – brilliant work from Year six.



## Reception trip to Twycross Zoo

By Miss Sophie Roberts—class teacher



The day finally came for our final trip as reception children: Twycross Zoo! We were all so excited!

We all came into class with a hop, skip and jump on Tuesday 18th July! We had everything we needed: a nice ice cold drink, a delicious snack, our yummy lunch, a waterproof (just in case) and the most important thing, £2 for ice cream! Everybody was in, so off we went on the coach! It was so exciting!

Once on the coach we chatted about all the animals we would see and decided on our favourite! The screams from the coach were so loud when we arrived and we just couldn't wait to get off the coach!



We all collected a Zoo map and headed straight to see the cheeky monkeys! There were so many we didn't know where to look! We headed to the brand new Gibbon Forest and as soon as we stepped in the gibbons came to say hello. Two cheeky gibbons banged the glass and put their hands against ours!

After the Gibbon Forest we headed to see the butterfly farm. It was very hot in there! Unfortunately after that the rain began to come down! It rained and rained and rained but we didn't let that stop us! We put our hoods up and carried on exploring the animals! We saw orange orangutan's, amazing apes, marvellous meerkats, grumpy gorillas, zebras and even a 90 year old tortoise!



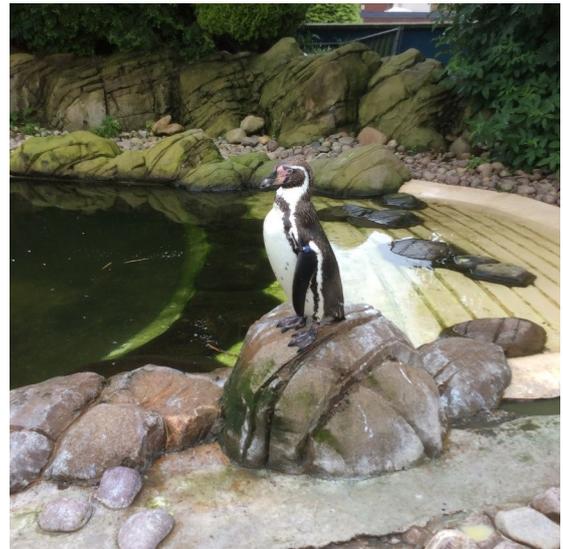
We were very lucky to visit the education centre! We had a teacher who read us the story 'Monkey Puzzle'. We all loved it! It got even more exciting when we got to see a real tortoise and Madagascan cockroach up close. Some of us were very brave and even stroked them! They were called Clive and Alan!

After drying off a little bit we headed to have some yummy lunch and a little rest! Once our bellies were full again we headed to see the amazing elephants and giraffes! The giraffes were being a little bit naughty and were fighting! Did you know they fight by swinging their necks!?!? We all told them off! The elephants were super cool! There was a little baby one that was playing with a football.

It was nearly time to go so we headed to see the penguins and hoped to get an ice cream! Sadly all the ice cream shops were closed because of the rain but our teachers surprised us with our very own mini monkey that we'll keep forever!

Once on the coach there was lots of chatter about our day at the zoo but once the coach got moving and the coach got quieter! Some of us fell asleep!!!!!!!

We had such an amazing trip! Our teachers were super proud of us and said that we were impeccably behaved and even the zoo keepers said we were superstars!



## Year 6 trip to Drayton Manor

By Mr Stuart Lackenby—Assistant Head Teacher



My legs were trembling, giving away beneath me as a wave of trepidation ran through my body. I could feel the wind begin to pick up as we ascended higher and higher and higher. When would it stop? Surely, we were near the top by now? I gripped tighter onto the handles; my knuckles turning alabaster and my heart pounding vociferously in my chest, echoing through my ears. A sudden jerk brought the horrid contraption to an abrupt and shakey stop. "Look how far you can see, Mr Lackenby," said Harry excitedly. I prised one eye open at a time and gulped in horror as I looked down and saw my legs dangling 177 feet above the floor. Time stood still...we hung there on the edge of the 'Apocalypse' for what seemed like an eternity. Without warning, a sudden click. Before I had time to close my eyes, I felt a force pushing me back into my seat and saw the ground hurtling towards me at 50 miles per hour; the floor rising with such speed to meet my trembling, jelly-like legs. With that, I let out a scream that was so high pitched only dogs could hear it...

What a wonderful year Year 6 is. Throughout the year, the children slowly count down the days, preparing themselves, knowing that very soon they will face their fears. The days and weeks pass and soon the nerves and tension become palpable until...the day arrives. No, I'm not talking about the dreaded SATs but instead, the fantastic trip to Drayton Manor that our children are very fortunate to go on as a reward for all of their hard work and effort throughout the course of the year. And if anyone deserved such a treat this year, it has been our Year 6 children, who have all worked incredibly hard and approached their SATs with courage, commitment and, dare I say for some, enthusiasm.

In the weeks leading up to the trip the children would tell me all sorts of stories of what to expect of Drayton Manor and what rides to go on. Being a secret adrenaline junkie at heart, and having never been to Drayton Manor before, I became very excited and couldn't wait for our trip to come round - just the hurdle of the SATs to complete and then the countdown could begin. Finally, the day had arrived. I'd never seen the children more excited as we set off by coach for what would be their final trip with Hill West.

As the doors of the coach opened, I was caught up in a stampede as the children ran enthusiastically for the gates; I couldn't help but also be caught up in the excitement of it all as their joy was truly infectious. "Where to first?" I asked. We'd arrived quite early so none of the rides were yet open.

"The amusements!" Danayal suggested, which of course was met with raucous agreement. And so we headed off to the amusements. What a fantastic time we had! All the children were quick to exchange their spending money for hundreds of two pence coins; spending £8 to win £1.50 worth of ticker tickets which they quickly exchanged for flashing bouncy balls or Haribo. After half-an-hour, it was time for the rides to open and so we headed off for our first ride of the day... 'The Malestrom'.



As the children rushed with glee onto the spherical ride, I nervously took my seat amongst them. "Don't hold on, Mr L," Kiara challenged me and so I strapped myself in not knowing what the ride actually did. With a rapid rush, the ride began to rotate and swing like a pendulum straight into the air, spinning at an ever-increasing speed. You could hear the children laughing and screaming in delight as the ride went higher and higher and the people on the ground grew smaller still. Then came the shout from Hamish, "Hands up!" And so we did. What a rush! As the ride came to an end, we dived quickly off and ran to the next ride of the day.



Our adrenaline was pumping as we sprinted towards 'Shockwave'. What luck, no queues! We darted straight on to the awaiting rollercoaster carriage and took our seats - not the comfiest I must say, what having to stand as you ride. "This goes upside down in loops you know." Mikail said with a grin on his face. I gripped the handlebars tight as the carriage jerked out of the station and began its ascent. Climbing steadily higher over the park, the sound of the chain quickened as we reached the top. And then the moment came. The release of the carriage. Now at the terrifying mercy of the Law of Physics. We zoomed down the drop towards the first bend in the track, picking up speed before being launched into a never-ending coil of twists and turns. One moment the sky was above us, the next the ground. Zooming, twisting, turning and then a flash of a camera catching us at our most terrified moment. We came to stop with a sudden screech of the hydraulics and looked at each other. "That was awesome!" I declared and we released our harnesses and continued on in our adrenaline-fuelled quest.



Next, thinking logically and sensibly, we decided a visit to the log flume ('Stormfoce 10) would do us good – this way, we could get wet and then quickly dry off on one of the rollercoasters. Unfortunately, this didn't go quite to plan. Within seconds of getting on our flume, we descended rapidly down a steep drop at which point, unbeknown to us, strategically placed holes in the bottom of our boat allowed water to gush in and fill our once dry vessel. From here, it was pretty much downhill as waterfalls, jets and cannons assaulted us from every angle, saturating us to the core and giving us a very early bath. 'Whose clever idea was this?' I kept asking myself as we trudged and squelched our way out of the exit.

The morning passed by quickly; ride, after ride, soaking after soaking until several of the children turned a strange shade of chartreuse. We decided now would be a good time to have lunch and gather ourselves. Of course, wanting to continue with their healthy and balanced diets, the children decided on some very sensible lunch options: doughnuts, fried chicken, hot dogs, ice cream, sweets and fizzy drinks. Quite sensible choices for a theme park, wouldn't you agree? After everyone had rested and waited a sensible time to digest their food, if memory recalls a whole five minutes, I think, we headed off for more adventures, ready to conquer the rides we had not yet been on.

The dodgem cars were truly excellent; whizzing around the track trying to dodge the other drivers as Nia commanded the children, "Attack Mr Lackenby!!!" Next, was 'Air Race' where Robbie had a truly hair-raising moment before quickly moving on to 'Pandemonium' – well, it certainly lived up to its name.

And then the time had come. The moment I had been dreading all day. The moment I had been mentally blocking out of my head as to not think of it or even contemplate the notion of doing it. I would now have to ride 'APOCALYPSE'.

"I've been on it before. It's not too bad. You just drop straight down." Hamish said nonchalantly.

Not too bad, not too bad...? How can anything that drops you straight down be described as "...not too bad"? I took a deep breath. I had to do it. Harry had told me all day how he wanted to conquer his fears of it and so I agreed. I walked slowly towards the towering structure of the 'Apocalypse', keeping my cool and telling myself it would be ok. "Sitting or standing?" asked the attendant.

"Standing," replied Jack within a nanosecond. Thanks, Jack. Thanks a lot!

And so we were strapped in. I watched with an eagle eye as the attendants palm hovered above the button that would begin our ascent into the air. Almost in slow-motion, her hand came on the button and up we went...

The fact that I am writing this now should have indicated to you that I survived the 'Apocalypse' (just). Our time at Drayton Manor had come to an end and as I stood watching the children, each with a huge smile on their face, I thought to myself, 'This is what it is all about. Not the SATs; the arithmetic or their ability to identify subjunctive form and past progressive tenses, but the memories. The memories that they have made together today; the memories that will live on long after they have left primary. Memories that they will look back on in years to come with a happy heart and remember the great times they had with their friends. And so we headed for home and I couldn't help but smile as I reflected on the new additions to my memories. Thank you,



## Hill West PTFA Fun Run

By Izzy Brown—Class Teacher



The Hill West fun run event takes place in May. It is a wonderful event that brings families and friends to our beautiful, local Sutton Park.



When all of the runners have their badges attached with safety pins with the help of our PTFA parent volunteers and teacher staff, they are ready for the start line.

When the runners took their starting positions you could feel the excitement in the air! The whistle went and the runners set off. While the rest of us stood in the beautiful sunshine waiting while friends and loved ones tried their best to complete the challenge of the 5K Fun Run.



After no time at all we had our winner of the Hill West Fun Run! Storming over the finish line was a Year 7 boy from Arthur Terry. Our Hill West winner, coming third overall, was Thomas Smith in Year 5. An enormous achievement and we know he was very proud.

All of the participants in the Fun Run should be immensely proud of their achievements and we hope it has sparked a love of running.



## Year 6 Graduation

By Miss Amie Hyde—Class Teacher

On Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July, Year 6 children were joined by their parents and teachers to celebrate coming to the end of their time at Hill West. The programmes were put to good use as, with it being the hottest day of the year, they proved to make excellent fans!

It was a bittersweet evening, with celebrations for 'graduating' from Primary School but with that comes the sadness too. Mrs Leeson opened up the evening by reading a poem about how children are like kites. This was followed by the children's first performance of the night, from their recent production of Ali Baba and the Bongo Bandits, they sang the opening song: Baghdad Bazar.

Next was Mr George and Miss Hyde with a summary of the year and some thoughts and messages for the children before James, Hamish and Saffron shared their thoughts about their time in year 6. It was then time for the presentation of the 'scrolls' as each child was called up individually to receive their accolade. There was also time for a photo opportunity with Dr Clarke (who pulled lots of different poses - much to the delight of everyone in the room!)

It was then time for Mr Lackenby to pass on his pearls of wisdom to the children and reflect on the children's perception of time throughout their school years. Year 6 then sang their second song of the evening before Melissa and Nia concluded the speeches for the evening with their thoughts on the moving on to secondary school.

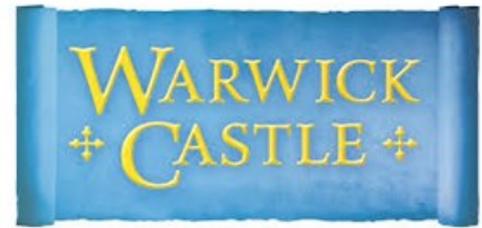
All that was left was for Dr Clarke to close the evening before the children's final song. By the time they had finished, there wasn't a dry eye in the house!



*It's time to say goodbye today  
our time together is done  
we sang, we read, we learned so much  
remember all the fun.  
I send you on to sing some more  
there's more to sing it's true.  
You'll always be a part of me--  
I'll be a part of you.  
I saw the smile grow on your face  
when you tackled something new,  
i watched as you sparking eyes lit up,  
my eyes they glistened too.  
I know you have hard work ahead  
with challenges all new,  
all that we've learned together this year  
will support you through and through.  
I send you on to read some more  
there's more to read it's true.  
You'll always be a part of me--  
I'll be part of you.  
I wish you well, I'll cherish you  
as you walk out the door today,  
know for certain where ever you go  
you're in my heart to stay.*

Year 2 trip to Warwick Castle

By Mr Britton —Class Teacher



## Wicked Warwick Castle



**W**ow! What an amazing time we had at Warwick Castle. As soon as we got off the coach the fun started with a demonstration of the trebuchet. A trebuchet is a catapult on a colossal scale. On

this occasion a boulder was fired 150m into the sky across a field. However, fireballs could be fired to damage castle buildings. Also dead animals were flung over the walls to spread disease. How disgusting!

After watching the catapult launch a boulder we tucked into our lunches. As we were eating lunch, the local ducks came over to have a bite. It



was a good job the teachers were on-hand to save the sandwiches!

After lunch we marched over to Guy's Tower. The tower is over 39m tall consisting of a steep, tight spiral staircase. Most of us made it to the top and were welcomed by a panoramic vista of Warwick castle.



# WARWICK CASTLE

Next on our list was the birds of prey talk. There were huge vultures, eagles and falcons that flew from turret to turret. The staff explained kings and queens trained birds of prey to capture small mammals for the noblemen to eat. That's fast food!



We were quizzed how we would invade the castle. Several answers were given from, climbing the wall, getting a rope or using a ladder. However, we discovered the best way in was the same way we get into our homes – through the front door.



A while later we made it to the castle walls. It was there we were greeted by our tour guide, who was carrying a sword. It was funny how quiet the children were as he gave his talk. . .

Since the children were so well behaved for the tour guide (with the sword) we finished the day off with an exploration of the Horrible Histories Maze.

A great day was had by all: Nobody was catapulted, the ducks never managed to eat our sandwiches and no-one had their heads chopped off. The children learnt a lot which will no doubt fuel their writing in school. Thank you to all the adults who helped on the trip.



## Year 1 trip to Hatton Country World

By Miss Bolton—Swallows Class Teacher and Assistant Head



On Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> June Year 1 went on a visit to Hatton Country World. We were all very excited to learn all about how to care for animals.

When we arrived at Hatton Country World we were excited by all the great activities the adults had planned for us. First of all, we had a tractor ride- it was so exciting, we saw lots of animals including cows and sheep. We also went through a huge puddle- we thought we would get soaked but luckily the tractor only drives slowly! After this we went sheep racing, all of Hill West had to cheer on sheep number two- unfortunately we

came 3<sup>rd</sup> but we certainly cheered loudly.

We learnt how to care for animals, we spent lots of time looking at all the different animals which live at Hatton Country World such as donkeys, goats, piglets and rabbits. There were three sets of piglets which were only a few days old- they were tiny! Lots of us were excited and we were allowed to feed the goats.





The food didn't smell very nice but the goats certainly loved it. They licked it out of our hands and left green spit on our hands too! We had to wash our hands lots.

The weather was fantastic on our visit and we managed to sit outside on the picnic tables for lunch. After lunch, we had a look at all the reptiles and smaller animals, some of us even got to hold a Guinea Pig. We spent the rest of the afternoon outside in the sun on the play areas.

We played on the bouncy castles, slides, climbing frames and trampolines. It is fair to say that we were extremely tired and most of us slept all the way home!

We all had a brilliant day!

## Year 5 trip to the Think Tank

By Miss Gibson—Class Teacher



**thinktank**  
Birmingham science museum

During year 5 we are lucky enough to venture into the world of Space! Which for the majority of the children is their favourite topic of the year; perhaps it has something to do with the Milky Way, or the burning hot star, which we call our sun.

Children learn about the planets in our solar system, how the moon affects our night and day, even our seasons. We learn about the history of Space, and how the first man on the moon is still influential to today's future astronauts.

When year 5 visited the Think Tank planetarium in Birmingham, the children were very excited. Some wanted to find some fun facts about the solar system, others went with a particular planet in their mind which they wished to find more information about and some wanted career advice on how to become an astronaut.

We arrived just after 10am and were greeted by the staff at the Think Tank, and provided with our agenda for the day.

Up first we all entered the planetarium and took to our seats, within moments we were submerged into darkness. Our guide took us through the wonderful world of space, and the children experienced what a clear sky is like, and the amount of stars in comparison to Birmingham was incredible. The children learnt about how the word "month" got its name, from the moons rotation period.

After this, we went into a classroom setting, here the children had 3 carousel activities to complete. The

first being the "Training Zone" this involved battling against gravity, and testing out their fitness. Although, Mrs Sale (Freddie's Mum in Badgers) got the best score for the fitness test, the children also did really well. The next activity was an experiment to test the absorbency of certain powders the astronauts must put in their trousers to ensure if they go to the toilet whilst in their suit they will remain dry. The children (obviously) loved the humour of this activity. The



final activity involved construction and engineering, I loved the fact the children were able to try out so many different skills, and they all found something that really suited their personality.

Towards the end the children went on an app (on an iPad) which determined what job they would be suitable for, called 'destination space'. The majority were astronaut trainers, or astronaut engineers, which they were very pleased about.

We had a short lunch break, where the children behaved beautifully, and really were an asset to Hill West.

It was now time for the Science Garden,, luckily we had lovely weather, so the outdoor learning space was a fantastic way for the children to develop their learning, mix with other children and have fun.

I have been on a number of school trips in the past few years, but I can honestly say this trip was one of my favourites. The children were fantastic, and the structure of the day worked fabulously for us.

To conclude, the Think Tank Planetarium offers a wide range of shows about astronomy and space, including tours around the night sky, adventures around the solar system, and journeying to the edge of the universe. The children get to explore the outer reaches of space, get to grips with innovative inventions and marvel at how medical advancements are saving lives. The Science Garden is an outdoor discovery space packed with surprises and fun activities for the whole family. It offers an adventurous and entertaining day out, bringing themes of engineering, mechanics and transportation to life through over 30 hands-on exhibits.

Hence we had a fantastic day, which involved learning and FUN!

An absolute must for any child (or parent).



## Reception—Bring your pet to school day

By Rebecca Waldron—School office

When Mary's little lamb followed her to school one day the teacher turned it out but our Reception Class were in for a treat on 'Bring Your Pet To School Day'! The classroom was full of dogs, rabbits, a tortoise and even some snails. Everyone, animals and children, were really well behaved and the children showed great maturity and sensitivity when they met the animals. The animals, in return, were incredibly patient and tolerant .

Mrs Page, teaching assistant in Wrens, explained, that pets demonstrate friendship and they are a good influence to make the children show responsibility. Anna Newport said "I really liked it when my friends liked my pet tortoise". And Sophie Fisher said "I enjoyed doing tricks with my dog Miffy" while Rimini said "I don't have a pet but I'd really like one" - are you reading this mummy and daddy?



Mrs Page's dog 'Taffy'



**Power to the pupils!**

**Introducing the ATLP's new student leadership group**

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Arthur Terry  
**Learning  
Partnership**

**Power to the pupils!**

## **Introducing the ATLP's new student leadership group**

Outstanding pupils from seven primary and secondary schools in Coleshill, Erdington and Four Oaks, came together last week for the first official meeting of the Arthur Terry Learning Partnership Student Leadership Team.

The landmark event – which took place at the Stockland Green School - marked the first time students from each academy in the respected multi-academy trust had been together at the same time. The newly-formed team will see pupils take on key leadership roles as they work together with fellow pupils and adult leaders to represent the student voice and help shape the future direction of the wider ATLP.

Fourteen pupils - two from each academy: Arthur Terry, Coleshill and Stockland Green secondaries, and Brookvale, Hill West, Mere Green and Slade primaries, have been selected to represent their schools at leadership level.

The dynamic children, who range from year 4 to 10, will take on positions that mirror the existing ATLP adult leadership structure. The team will lead on a number of projects to further enhance the pupil experience and encourage further collaboration across all of the schools.

During their first session last week, the children met with Stockland Green headteacher, Marie George. After getting to know each other and working in different groups, the team took part in presentations, discussions and games. They also gained a greater understanding of the ATLP and the benefits it brings, along with the role that they will be playing in the future of the partnership.

Assistant headteacher and project co-ordinator, Rebecca Goode, said: *There is strong evidence that students who are given a wide range of opportunities to develop and practise leadership skills are better prepared for life beyond school.*

*As a school and across the partnership we are keen to maximise the number of opportunities for students to develop these key skills and collaborate. We value student voice, and recognise their ideas and creativity. This has been the start of a very exciting adventure for both students and staff."*

Following the success of their first session, the team will now meet at different ATLP schools as they familiarise themselves with the partnership and formulate their ideas for the future. The group will then present their plans to all of the ATLP headteachers.

In true ATLP style, the pupils have worked well together, bonding quickly and proactively sharing and engaging in a range of ideas and activities. All of the team are enthusiastic about the team and are extremely keen to have their say in ATLP matters.



Danyal, a year 4 pupil from Slade, said he had “*butterflies*” when he was chosen for the team and that his supportive classmates had cheered him on. His new friend, year 5’s Freddy, from Mere Green, was loving mixing with all the other pupils, while the Coleshill School’s Charlotte, year 10, said: “*I enjoy meeting other students and it’s been great to visit another of our schools. I’m really looking forward to what we can achieve as a team.*”

Brookvale’s Marco enjoyed taking part in a trading style exercise, while fellow year 5 pupil, Rhea, from Hill West, said: “*it’s been a great day.*” One of the older students, Cameron, a year 10 from Arthur Terry, said that working with the younger children had been “*great fun*” and Stockland Green’s Joshua, year 9, said: “*We are all excited about meeting again – it’s been a big success.*”

Stockland Green School’s headteacher, Marie George, said: “*The day was phenomenal. Our students really are amazing. They have worked brilliantly with each other from start to finish and have really bonded as our Student Leadership Team. They have worked on a calendar of events that they would like to run next year. They are an exceptionally creative group and have come up with some great ideas.*”

“*The feedback from our children has been so positive and they are really looking forward to their next sessions together. A huge thank you to the staff who organised and delivered a truly great day and for all the time and effort they put in to ensure the children have such an enjoyable experience – a real team effort as always.*”

## Awards Ceremony

By Claire Bracher—Teaching Assistant

At Hill West we promote the awareness that each child is unique and we celebrate our similarities and differences. We are an inclusive school and work hard to ensure our pupils feel valued and respect others, regardless of background or beliefs. Therefore at the end of the year Hill West hold a special award ceremony which recognises children's achievements and success throughout the school academic year. These awards are chosen by teaching staff who believe that the children chosen have shown a specific range of skills, effort and determination. The awards also highlight children that have shown a special talent in an area of the non-core curriculum such as music and sports.

The children who have 100% attendance are also congratulated as they have succeeded in attending school every day since September.

Children also get to experience their achievements with their parents who are invited by letter to attend the ceremony. This is great afternoon for parents as they get to share in the celebrations.

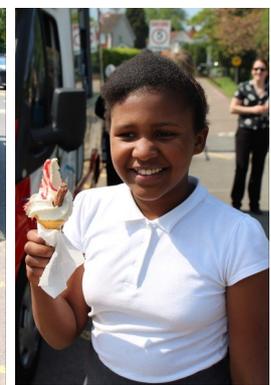
This year the awards ceremony was extra special due to us now being able to use the key stage 1 hall which meant that all classes could be involved in celebrations and children could give their class friends a high five!



## Year 6—Ice-cream Celebration

After months of hard work, 100% effort and sheer determination to succeed our Year 6 pupils had a week of end of key stage tests.

The children faced the challenge with maturity and dedication and were rewarded with a visit from the ice cream van after their final exam.



# Judo

By Hayden Yates—Year 5

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I have been practising the martial art of Judo since I was 4 years old. I train at the North Birmingham Judo Club, based in Streetly.

In April I entered the British Judo Council Open National Championships. This is a large national tournament and it was held in Kettering. Over 500 Judoka (Judoka is the name of someone who practises the art of Judo) competed in the competition. I fought in the 31kg to 35kg category and competed against numerous opponents from around the country.

I managed to get through to the final rounds, eventually taking the Bronze medal for my category.

I would recommend Judo to other children or adults because it is a good sport for self discipline, fitness and respect for others.



**If your child has been celebrating success in a activity such as sport, music, drama, dance etc, outside of school, please speak to Rebecca Waldron in the school office and we may be able to feature you in the next edition of the Herald.**