



Connor Downs Academy

Head of School: Mrs J Eddy



Connor Downs
Academy

Year 6

Spring Term 2022

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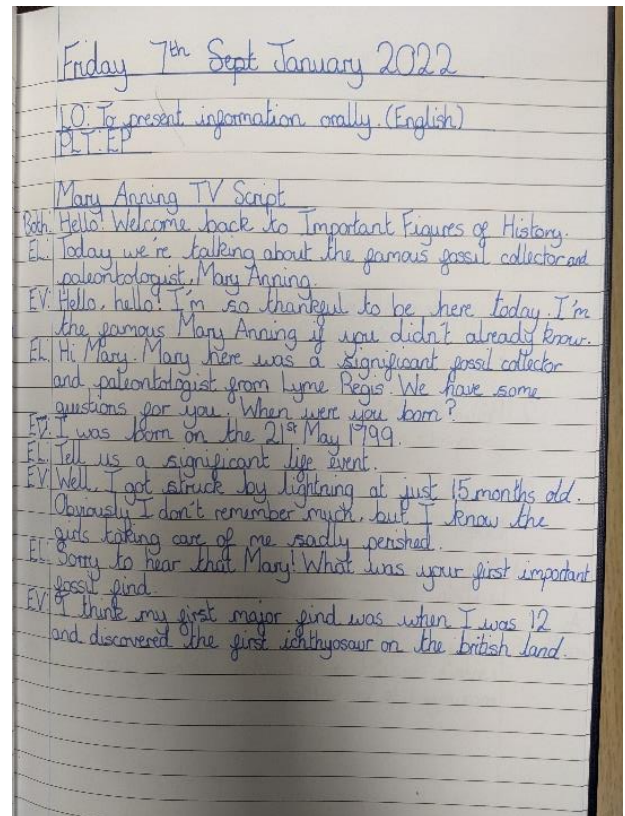
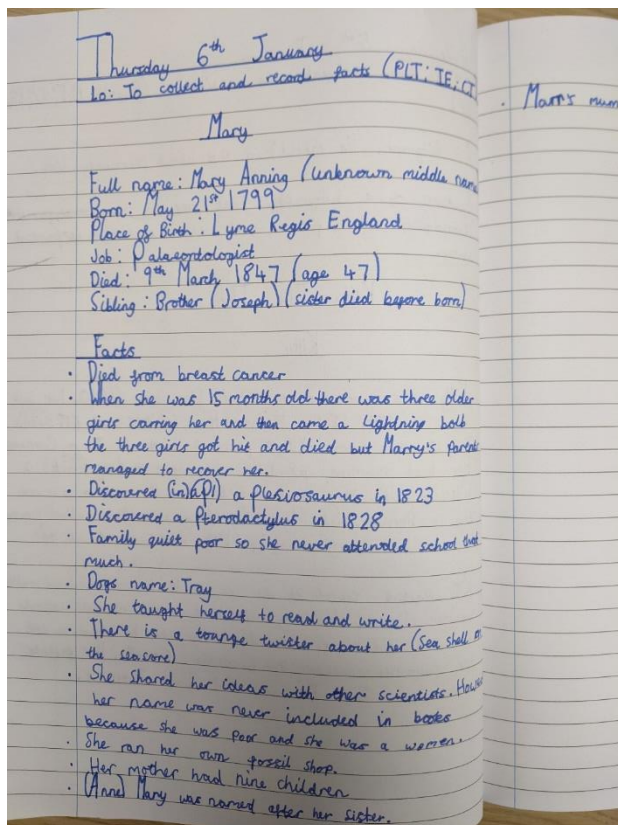
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English

For the first half of this term, the topic Y6 studied was entitled 'Darwin's Delights'. The children developed an understanding of evolution and the natural world. To accompany this in English, the children researched, drafted and edited biographies about Mary Anning, the famous paleontologist or Charles Darwin, the famous naturalist. Some children wrote their biography as a script to perform, perhaps for a television programme- this enabled them to demonstrate their ability to write in formal and informal manner.



Following on from this, the children developed their skills to write a non-fiction text. This relied upon children collecting appropriate information online, and then re-organising it into a piece of writing that is easy to read. The children were also challenged to use scientific vocabulary in their report and to use a range of sentence openers and punctuation.

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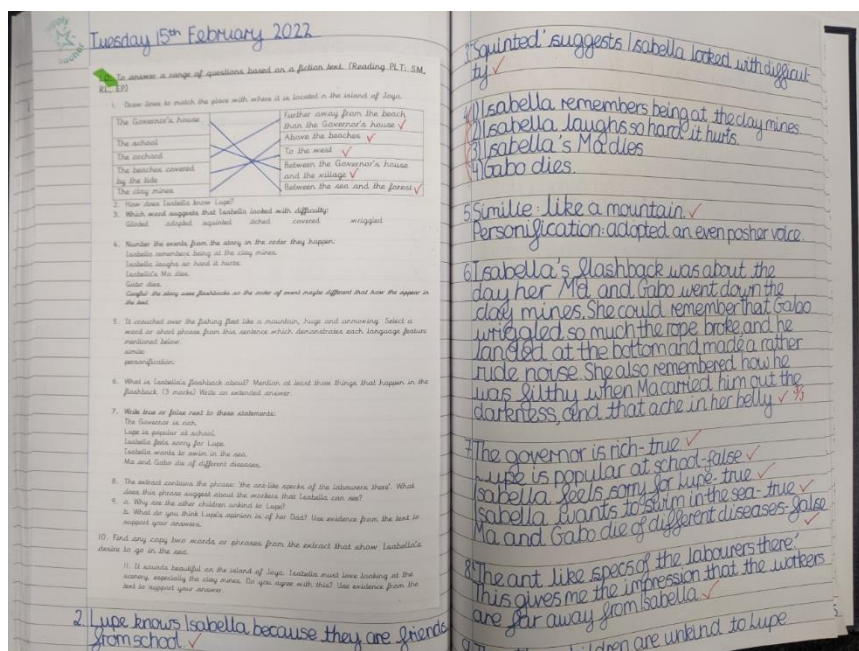
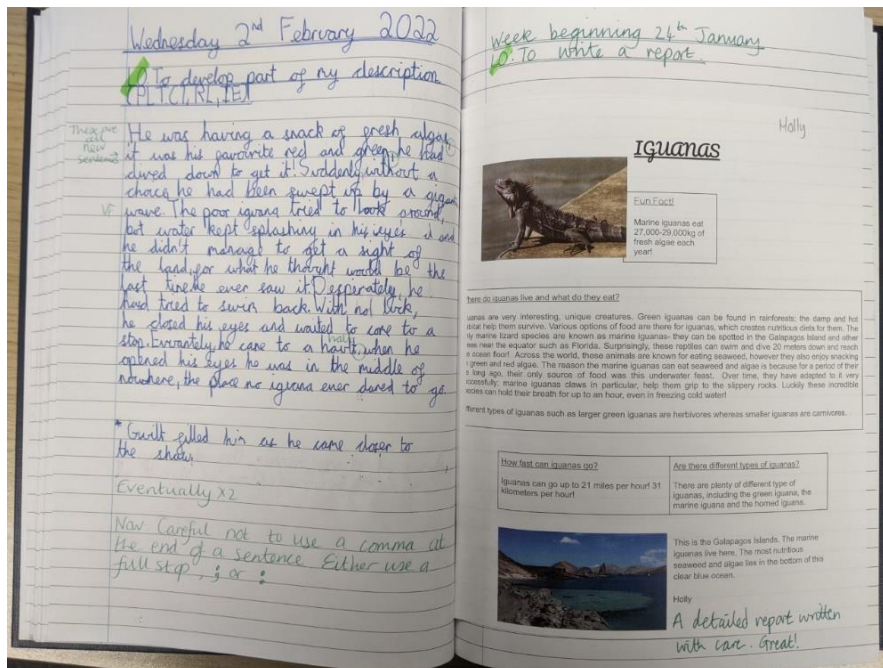
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To develop this theme, the children then wrote a descriptive piece based on a short film of a real-life marine iguana who was spotted swimming in the ocean four miles

from shore. By using their imaginations, the children considered why the iguana might be in the ocean, alone and how he must have felt being escorted back to the mainland on a speed boat! The children developed their use of noun phrases and precise verbs to develop their descriptions.



The children are assessed at the end of Key Stage two through a collection of their independent writing. We have spent some time this term revisiting pieces of work from the Autumn term and making sure they are powerful, effective pieces of work with accurate spelling and punctuation.

To accompany our topic entitled,

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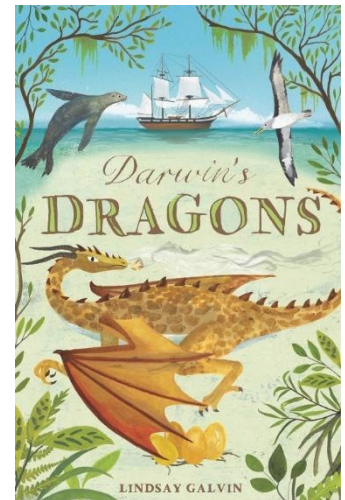
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'Tomorrow's World', the children have written a short suspense story. These were inspired by a story of a child having what appears to be a truly traumatic experience of being put into a 'moving metal box', being 'dragged along the ground' and 'forced to wear tight, restrictive clothing'. The end of the story reveals that in fact, the child is simply attending a ballet class.

Our class text this term has been 'Darwin's Delights' by Lindsay Garwin, which is a dramatic story about a boy who travels with Darwin to the Galapagos Islands and uncovers a colony of dragons.



On World Book Day, in March, the children focusing on the craft of being a writer. They researched facts about an author of their choice and found out how a book goes on the journey to being published. The children brought in a book they have enjoyed from home and shared them (sometimes with plenty of enthusiasm) with the class.



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Maths

Every morning, the children complete a range of tasks to practise their skills. These are often arithmetic questions, or are problem-solving tasks. Being able to recall previous knowledge from a range of topic areas is an important skill to build confidence in the run up to the children completing their SAT assessments in May.

The topics covered this term have included decimals, percentages, algebra, area and perimeter and shape. By providing children with a rich diet of learning opportunities, through the use of practical resources, videos, independent learning tasks and group problems to solve, progress in maths for the class is rapid. The children are regularly assessed in what they have learnt; this ensures that their future learning can be consolidated. This is done sometime through lessons in class with all the children, in smaller groups or 1 to 1 with an adult.

The additional Maths session on a Tuesday afterschool enabled the class to benefit from working in a small group. The children practise important skills and work through problem solving questions- this helps build both skills and confidence.



To help the children revise topics, we have spent some time playing games, such as matching up fractions, decimals and percentages and missing angles.

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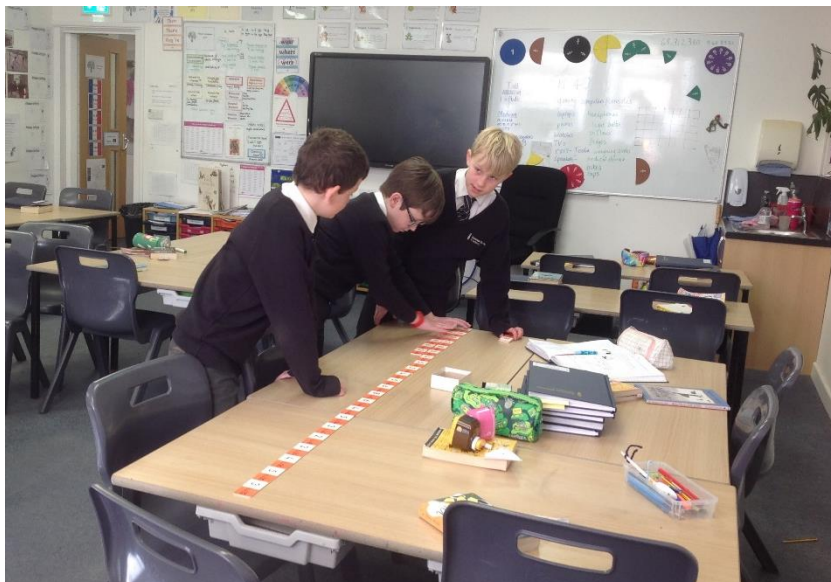
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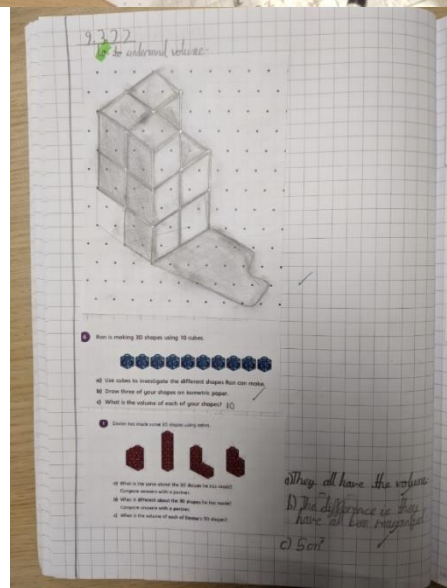
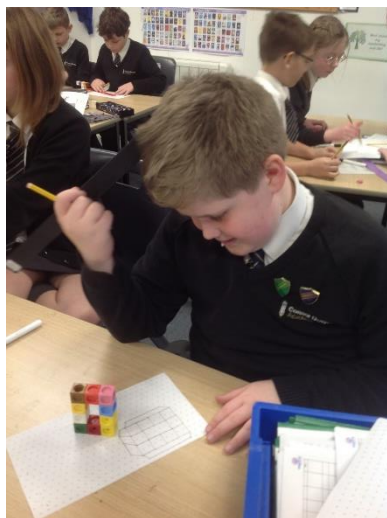
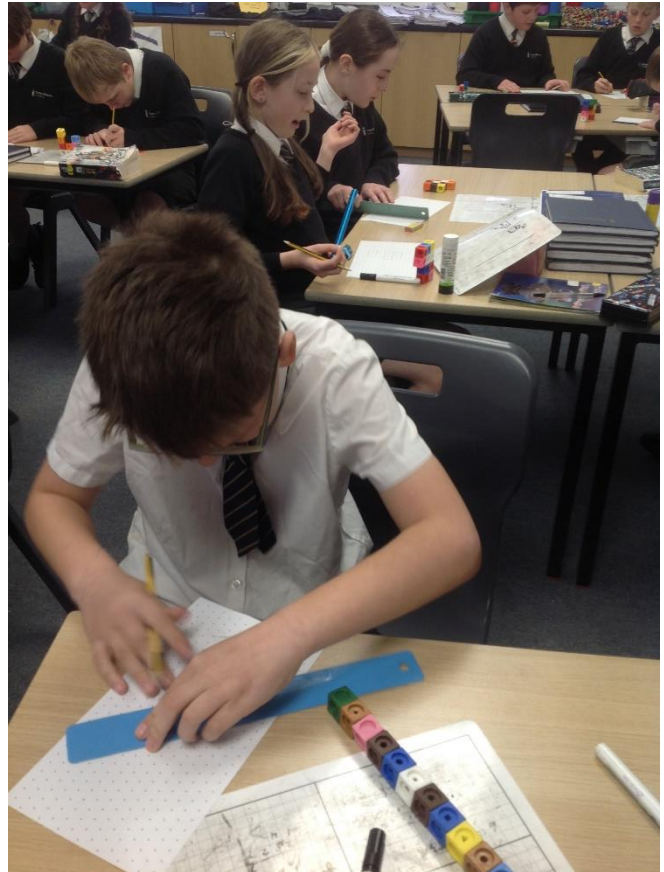
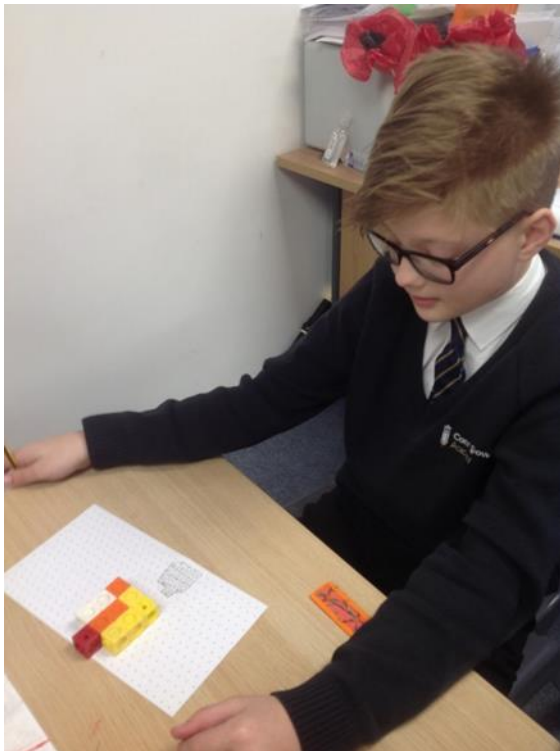
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One topic studied in detail this term has been shape. Below you can see photos of the children exploring volume and drawing the shapes they had created.



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Science

After learning that Charles Darwin studied the differences between finches on the Galapagos Islands, Y6 were challenged with investigating how different beak shapes and sizes affect what a bird can eat. They used tweezers, scissors, and a spoon to see how many small seeds (frozen peas) and worms (elastic bands) they could pick up in a minute. The results made it really clear that evolution has affected beak size and shape.

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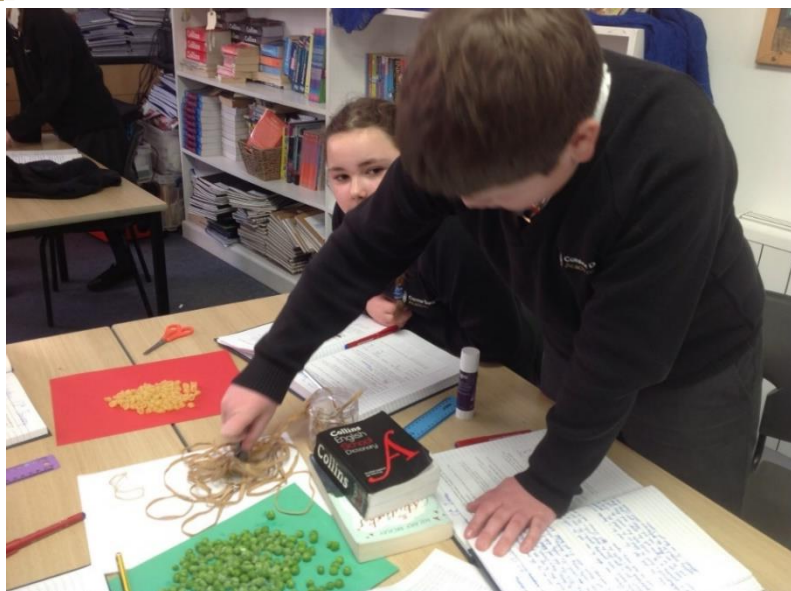




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The children learnt about the fossil record and how fossils were made. The white outlines are not actually bones! It was excellent timing that in the very same week, the largest [ichthyosaurus](#) (sea monster) to be found in the UK was revealed in Rutland Water!



Another practical science lesson enjoyed by the children was extracting DNA from strawberries. After crushing the strawberries and adding salt, water and washing-up liquid, the mixture is then filtered. When a trickle of ice-cold surgical spirit is added, small white threads can be seen- these are DNA. The children went on to learn what DNA was and why it is important. They also learnt how species have different characteristics due to environment factors, or their genetics.



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The final lesson involved the children identifying characteristics of animals that enabled them to live in certain environments.

On Wednesday 26th February, Y6 visited The Cornish Seal Sanctuary in Gweek near Helston. We were prepared for very bad weather, yet it never arrived! The children first took part in a workshop where they learned about the dangers of having microplastics in our oceans.

Some volunteers were blindfolded and had to guess what the plastic item found in the ocean was. Some were 30 or 40 years old!

The children then completed a true or false quiz and were challenged to attach a rubber band to their fingers and remove it without using their other hand. This helped the children understand how dangerous plastic waste is to wildlife. The children also learnt how seal pups are rescued by the sanctuary and that the most important item they use is a towel to protect it and keep it safe.

After lunch, the children met the penguins, mighty sealions and lots of seals! They were able to watch the seals enjoy a large plastic ball filled with fish to eat!



A very memorable moment of the trip was watching the seals through the glass as they thunder around under the water and appear in the glass! Chloe, our guide, was very informative and answered all the children's questions about seals, other wildlife and the fantastic ocean habitat we have around our coastline.

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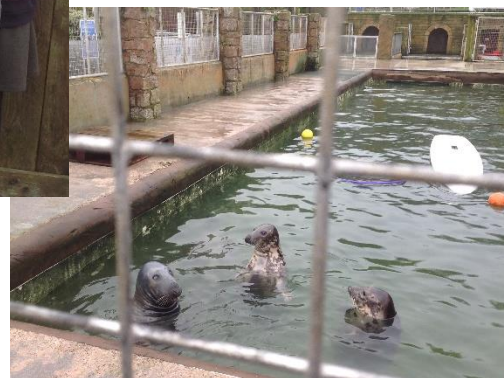
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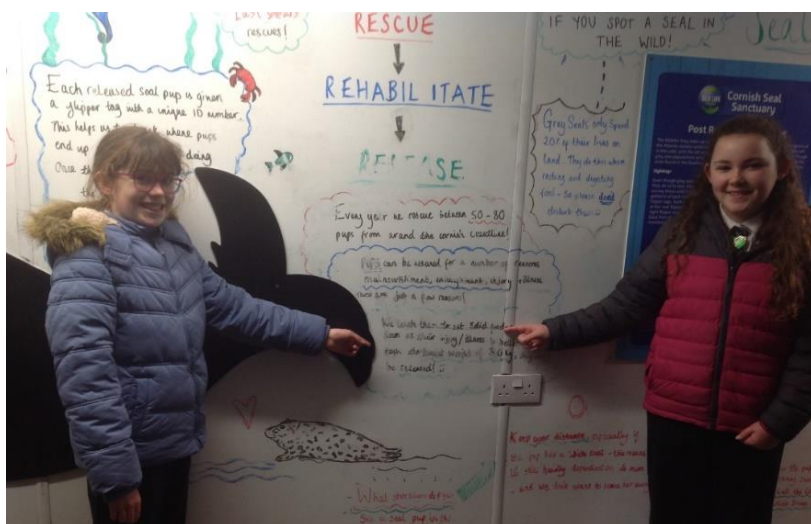




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This half term, the Science unit has been Light. In class, exploring how light travels in straight lines, what a shadow is and what affects their size.



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History

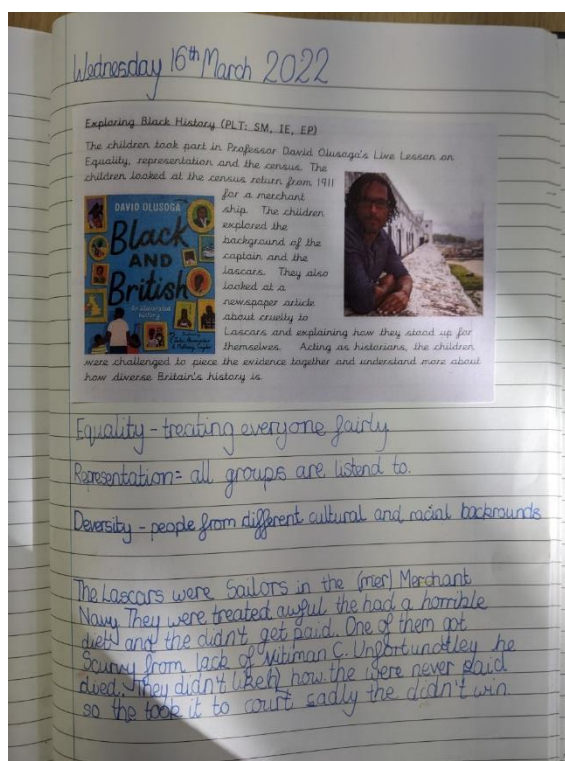
The children wrote biographies about Mary Anning or Charles Darwin. They learnt that because Mary Anning was poor and a woman, she wasn't recognised for her achievements in finding many significant fossils. Spotting fossils and excavating them correctly was a real talent. She sold her findings for money which enabled her to eventually buy her own house and shop. By co-incidence, a new statue of Mary is being erected on the seafront of Lyme Regis later on this year.

Other children researched Charles Darwin, discovering how many specimens he collected on his voyage and brought back to the UK.

In March, the children found out about the history of the sailors on a merchant ship using census records. They found out how a group of sailors, called the Lascars, were treated very poorly, using newspaper articles from the time. This helped prompt an important discussion in class about history and the importance of ensuring we learn about how diverse Britain's history is. We then read a story celebrating multiculturalism and watched a lesson held by Professor David Olusoga.

ICT

Our Tomorrow's World topic allowed the children to learn about the 2000 year old history of computing. The children explored examples of technology- including old laptops and



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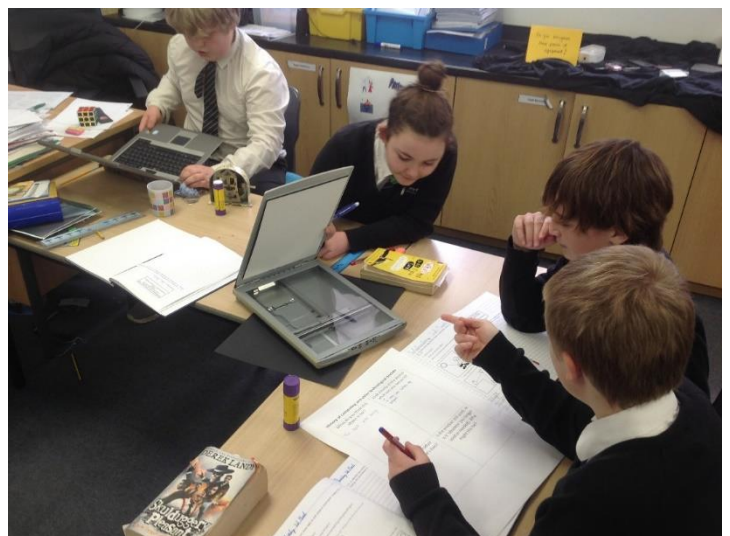
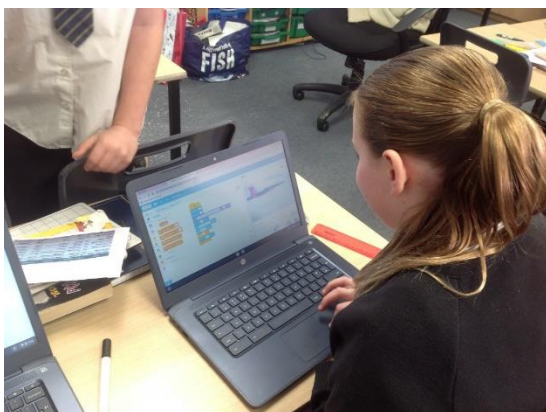
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phones, to understand how and why these have changed over time. The children learnt about network maps and thought about how wireless internet works. They spent time developing their coding skills using Scratch and using the language 'input' and 'output'.



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Geography

The children explored the route Charles Darwin took on the HMS Beagle in 1831 across the globe to South America, Australasia back around Africa. They considered what travelling by sailing ship must have been like and why the crew would have needed to stop so often as they travelled. Just how did sailors draw maps of entire countries without using satellites or planes? The answer of course is through the stars, through carefully measured angles and complex mathematics. Y6 learnt the difference between lines of latitude and longitude, as well as the tropic of Cancer and Capricorn and the Equator.



PE

In PE, Y6 have been developing their dance skills. Inspired by the Chinese and Christian stories of creation, over a series of weeks the children learned to use movement and action to tell a story. They began working alone, then in pairs and then in small groups to create a dance with a beginning, middle and end. Finally, as a class we worked out a routine involving everyone which we put to music.

The children also worked on their gymnastics skills, specifically learning how to roll in a number of ways.



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We were thrilled to host 'The Cornish Pirates Rugby Team' every Tuesday this half term who have helped Y6 develop their ball handling and passing skills. As rugby is a team game, the class also learned the importance of working together, and how everyone must play their part to have combined success.

There is plenty of new PE equipment in school which Y6 have been very helpful in keeping organised. The Sports Leaders are also continuing to be a huge asset to the playground at lunchtime. They organise games and help encourage other children to play and keep active at lunchtime.



Members of the Y5/6 football club attended a competition in February at a local school- the children returned to school having had an excellent time playing against other teams.



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The Cross Country team have also been competing at St Ives on quite a wintry day, yet all competed with smiles on their faces. Congratulations to the children who qualified for the next round!

Finally, some children were asked to represent the school at a cycling competition- the Year 6 team came in 2nd place- well done everyone!



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RE

The children have explored the Christian story of creation this term. We started by considering 'big' questions human beings may have, including how the world began. After learning that Christians believe the world was created in 7 days, Y6 created story maps and considered what was interesting or puzzling about the story.

After that, they learnt about the big bang theory and cosmology- including the fact we are all made of stardust! The children then considered if it was possible to be a Christian and yet believe the scientific explanations at the same time.

The unit concluded with Y6 reading different creation stories from the Mayan civilisation and Aborigines in Australia.

The final few weeks of term were spent learning about 'Salvation'. This included learning about the Easter story, including thinking about the sacrifice Jesus made for Christians.



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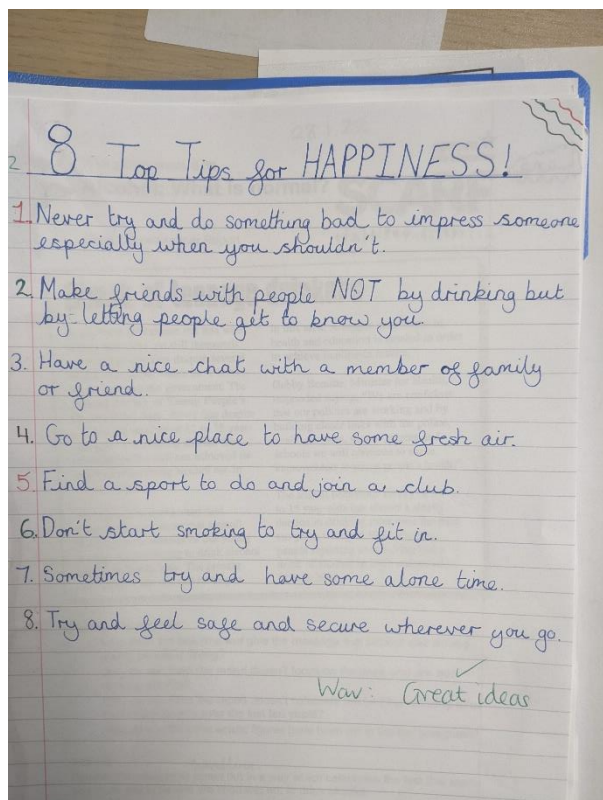
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PSHE

PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) is delivered through our weekly SCARF (Safety, Caring, Achievement, Resilience, Friendship) programme, but is present in all that we do in school. This term the focus has been on *Keeping Safe*. Lessons about being safe online, considering what is and isn't appropriate to share online as well as how to create a more secure password were well received by the class. They also learnt about legal, illegal, prescribed and restricted drugs and how alcohol affects the body. The children were surprised to find out that young people are drinking less alcohol than any other age group- great news!

The final few weeks of term were spent learning about Rights and Responsibilities which included learning about democracy.

The children created kites to celebrate friendship and wrote tips for being happy.



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DT/ART

The class also managed to study some fossils in real life! Y6 made continuous line studies of these- this is where they had to create an image without taking their pencil off the paper. The children explored how to make thicker lines and create texture in their work. Their concentration was great- the room was completely silent as the children worked. Finally, the children then used these images to create lino prints. These were so effective!



Another piece of art created this term was inspired by looking at photographs of spectacular places on planet earth. This worked well alongside their lessons about the creation story and contemplating how there is life on planet Earth.

During Child Mental Health Week, the children were encouraged to draw as a form of relaxation in the afternoons. As with all creative activities, they are absorbing and therefore allow us to feel less worried.

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Everyone loves Red Nose Day!

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