

Connor Downs Academy



December 2018

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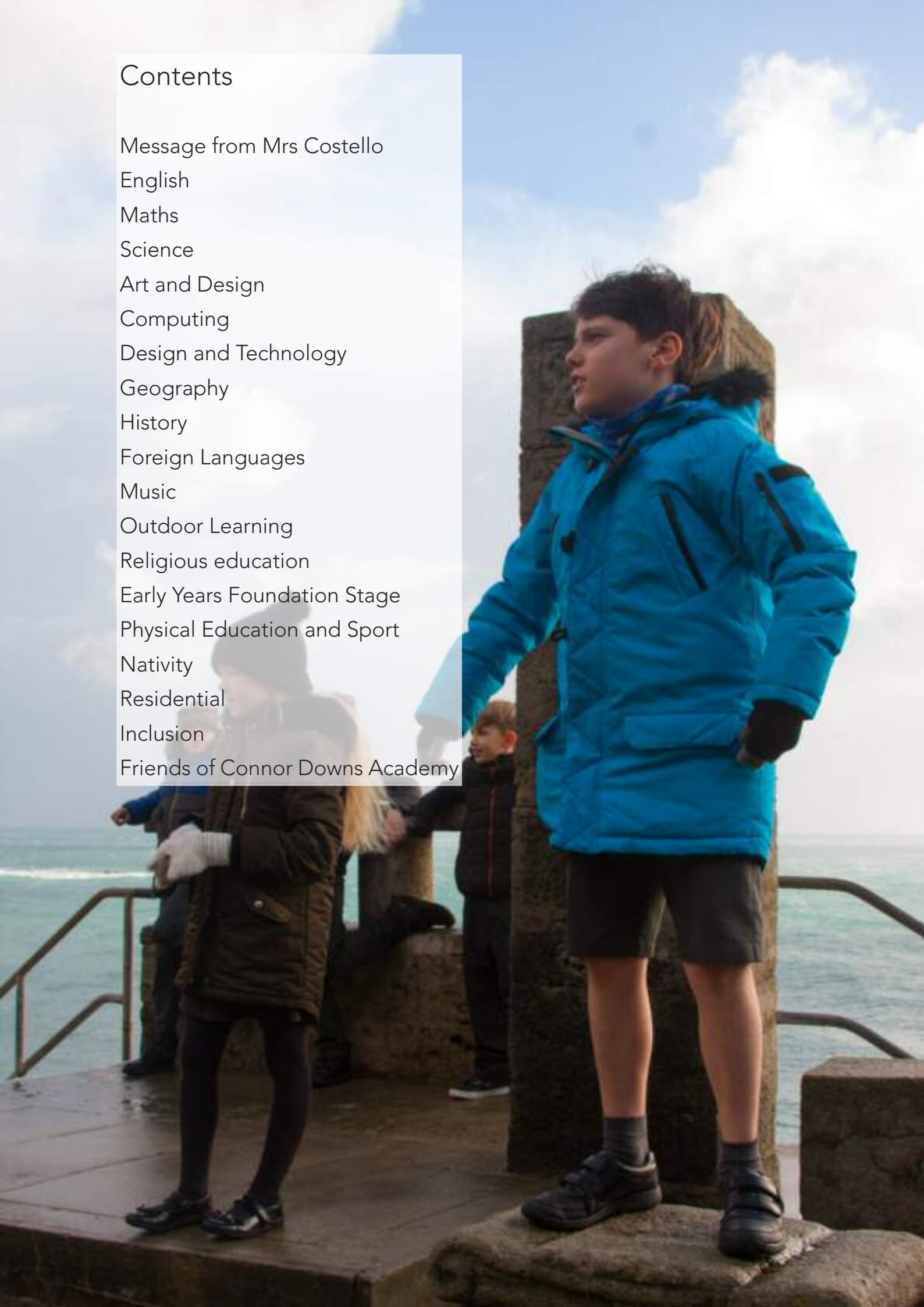
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A message from Mrs Costello

Dear parents and carers,

I hope that you enjoy reading the autumn term newsletter as much as I have. It has been wonderful to see how many exciting activities have been taking place across our academy involving children of all ages.

As usual, a highlight for me this term has been the appointment of our prefect and Head prefects. I was very proud to hand out their badges with Mrs Eddy earlier in the term. We have an outstanding team of prefects who are working very hard to make our school a friendly place for all children. They are particularly keen to support our youngest children in their first experiences of school-life and to support staff at break times.

I also enjoyed seeing so many of our children enjoying their music performances and I hope that you all had the opportunity to watch them perform too. We have so many talented children, from singers, dancers and actors to engineers of the future. It was a pleasure to see them having fun on stage and working together on their performances as a team.

The remainder of this newsletter will demonstrate just how much effort all of the staff here put into providing a curriculum that is full of diverse knowledge, understanding and skills. I would like to thank them all for their commitment to their vocation and for making Connor Downs such a special place for our children. Staff here do not only take great care to educate each child, but they truly care about each and every one of them.

Finally, I wish you all a merry Christmas. I hope that you enjoy extra-special family times now your children are at home with you over the festive period.

I look forward to seeing you all back in 2019!



English is at the very centre of all the learning that happens at Connor Downs. Evidence shows that a child who leaves their primary school without a secure understanding of spoken and written English, and a good reading level, is a child who will struggle in their further education. At Connor Downs, we work hard to ensure that all children at our school leave us with the best understanding of the subject that they can.

Reading brings joy, happiness, understanding and knowledge. In each class we immerse children into their class texts, enjoying regular, shared reading and delighting in the adventurous, rich vocabulary found within these books. In Year 1, our children have been enthralled by some of the most amazing stories, new and old. Reading books such as: 'The Gruffalo's Child', 'Room on the Broom', 'The Three Little Pigs', 'Jack and the Beanstalk' and 'Noah's Ark', has developed the children's understanding of the sequence of a story. Children from Year 2 have explored the feelings that different types of writing give them, from cold hard reports, through to emotive poetry, it was wonderful to see the way that they connected with each differing type. Our children from Year 1 and 2 also have daily Phonics lessons, developing their reading skills to enable them to become strong, independent readers. Year 3 children have delved deep in to two classic books, 'Stig of the Dump' and 'The Iron Man', enjoying these differing texts. They have also been demonstrating their growing understanding of what they are reading through comprehension activities. Reaching back to ancient times can help us to understand how our ancestors understood the world. Children from Year 4 were astounded by the Anglo Saxon epic, 'Beowulf' at the beginning of the term, before being delighted by Michael Morpurgo's adaptation of 'The Snowman'. In Year 5, the children have devoured their daily poetry, with the discussion leading from this providing a wonderful insight into the variety of poetic forms and the use of language. Their class story 'Danny Champion of the World' by Roald Dahl, has also been a focus for debate and given them a chance to enjoy the work of a master storyteller. As our children get older and more mature it is essential that they get exposed to more complex and advanced texts, our Year 6's have been reading Skellig over the past term. They have developed an understanding of this complex and emotive text as a class. The discussions that they have held over this book have been truly eye opening.



Learning to read is the first challenge, learning to understand what has been read is the second one. In all of our classes we work hard to ensure that children have a good grasp of what they are reading. All of our classes undertake weekly comprehension tasks, building the children's confidence to interpret and accurately digest the text that they are reading. The tasks that they carry out are frequently linked to the main topic that they are studying, or their class book. Our Year 1 children have really enjoyed answering questions on their class books, helping them get even closer to the fantastic characters within them, whilst our year 3 children have found out more about some of our local Stone Age sites whilst answering questions on these. Our older children have been focusing on extracting the exact information that they are being asked for from a text.

Things that we have read or seen often provide our children with inspiration for their own writing. Our Year 1's looked closely at the characters in the stories that they read in class, writing adjectives to describe them. They then went on to write extracts from stories including these well described characters. The Year 2 children were inspired by a visit they made to Lanhydrock house, creating an adventure story about toys which come alive at midnight. The toys they wrote about were all seen there in the nursery. In Year 3 our children watched a short animation called 'Bubbles'. This gave them the stimulus to create their own stories set in locations that were familiar to them. Year 3 have also been inspired by food to create their own riddle poetry. Year 4 took the popular fairy tale, 'Cinderella', dissected it, the reassembled it with their own twists added in. Each group succeeded in innovate the story in different ways, from changing characters to changing the ending of the story and even to writing it from a different viewpoint, that of the fairy godmother! Reading story's does not mean that we have just write a story however, Year 4's also took their class text, 'Beowulf' and wrote a newspaper report about the terrible attack on Hrothgar's Great Hall, describing how Beowulf defeated the ferocious monsters that had been terrorising the people of Denmark. The children enjoyed being journalists for a week! Year 5's like Year 3 turned to animation for inspiration, the children worked on retelling stories in their own words. They learned to engage their audience by varying their sentence types by studying examples from Alan Peat. Through a variety of sequencing activities, the children were able to produce a detailed plan. Our Year 6's used a very special opportunity to motivate them in their writing, the chance to become a prefect. They studied various formal letters before writing one of their own to apply for this post.





You can't write if you don't understand the conventions holding a language together. All classes at Connor Downs teach this. Year 1's have been hard at work using capital letters, full stops and finger spaces correctly in their sentences (National Curriculum Key Stage 1: punctuate sentences using a capital letter and a full stop, using joining words and joining clauses and leaving spaces between words). Our Year 2's focused on sentences and speaking ideas in complete sentences before writing. All the children contributed to toolkits to guide and support their writing. In Year 3 they have been learning to edit their written work, using dictionaries to edit spelling and to find the meaning of words. The children have also been developing an understanding about how to use a thesaurus to improve their vocabulary choices. Our Year 4 children have been expanding their range of exciting vocabulary, including similes and metaphors, in their writing to make their sentences even better. The children in Year 5 have been rifling through dictionaries, thesauruses and the 'descriptosaurus' in order to add colour to their writing. They were quick to learn how to "peer critique" and offered excellent cold and warm feedback to their friends in order to improve their first drafts. Year 5 children have enjoyed working in pairs using

Google Classroom to write their final drafts. They relished the opportunity to share their ideas and the capacity to edit and improve their work onscreen. The final pieces are displayed with pride on the literacy wall. Those children in Year 6 have been adding to their work to include a variety of sentence structures in their writing, the children have demonstrated great perseverance and resilience when developing their proofreading skills. Punctuation has been a particular area of focus, with the children completing a range of activities, then applying their skills to their independent writing. The use of semi-colons, single dashes and parenthesis is definitely improving, and these skills will be refined next term.

The importance of speech can not be forgotten. Our Year 1 children have been heard reciting their class stories to each other, trying out different voices for different characters. In Year 2, the children learnt to recite a poem clearly and with expression to hold the attention of their peers. Children from both Year 1 and 2 also performed fantastically in their nativity play. Our Year 5's also took to the stage, creating then performing their own 'Titanic' plays on the Minack theatres world famous stage, we really do have some budding actors and actresses amongst us. Year 6 children regularly debate ideas in class and some of the children practiced their formal speaking skills during their prefect interviews.

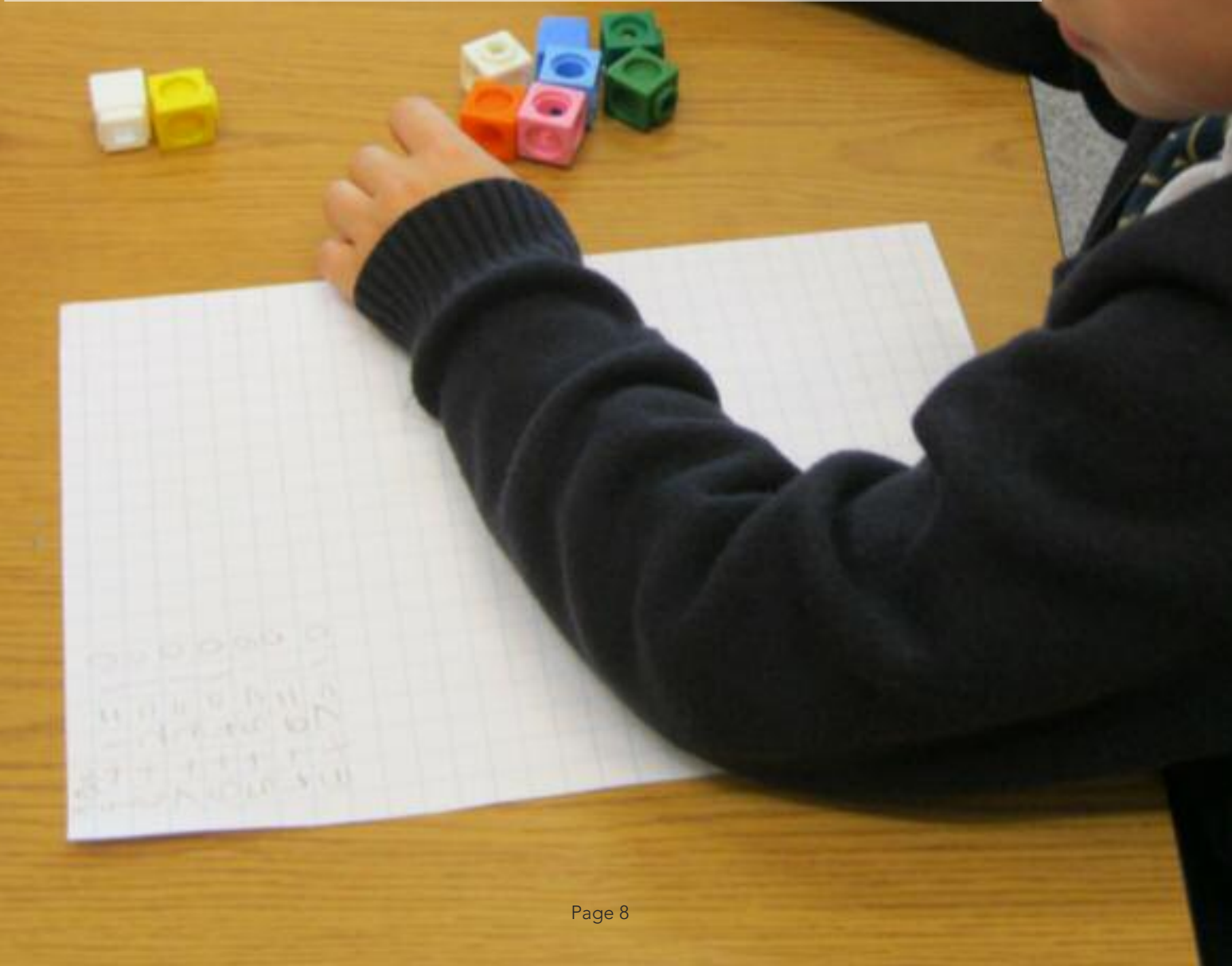


Mrs Bartaby and Mrs Law
English Leaders

Maths

Our aim is to equip all pupils with the skills and confidence to solve a range of problems through fluency with numbers and mathematical reasoning. Children at Connor Downs are encouraged to see the mathematics that surrounds them every day and enjoy developing vital life skills in this subject. We follow the White Rose planning framework to ensure that our curriculum promotes mastery and is full of challenge in every lesson. In every classroom you can see children wrestling with problems and using SNOT (Self, Neighbour, Other, Teacher) as they deepen their knowledge and understanding of maths. Children can be seen using concrete materials to support their learning before moving onto pictorial and abstract problems in their maths lessons. Our Mathletes have been absorbed by the range of engaging problems, quizzes and games that Mathletics provides. As all the children from Year 1 upwards have an individual login, they regularly access the resource at home and in school, resulting in a real buzz about maths throughout the school.

In Year 1 the children always work very practically with a range of resources. They use cubes, counters, number lines, Numicon and many more other natural resources to support their learning in maths. The children can count forwards and backwards, beginning with 0 or 1, or from any given number. They can count, read and write numbers to 20 in numerals and words. The children can now count confidently in 2's. The children are thoroughly enjoying chanting, singing and playing games with the 2X table. When adding and subtracting the children have used an array of different methods. The children are now familiar with the bar model and the part part whole model. The children can read and write addition and subtraction sentences both in numbers and words. They have risen to the challenge of increasingly complex word problems and missing number questions. When working with shape, the children can recognise and name common 2D and 3D shapes, including rectangles, squares, circles and triangles, cuboids, pyramids and spheres. Year 1 went for a shape walk around the school, identifying a range of 2D and 3D shapes in our environment.





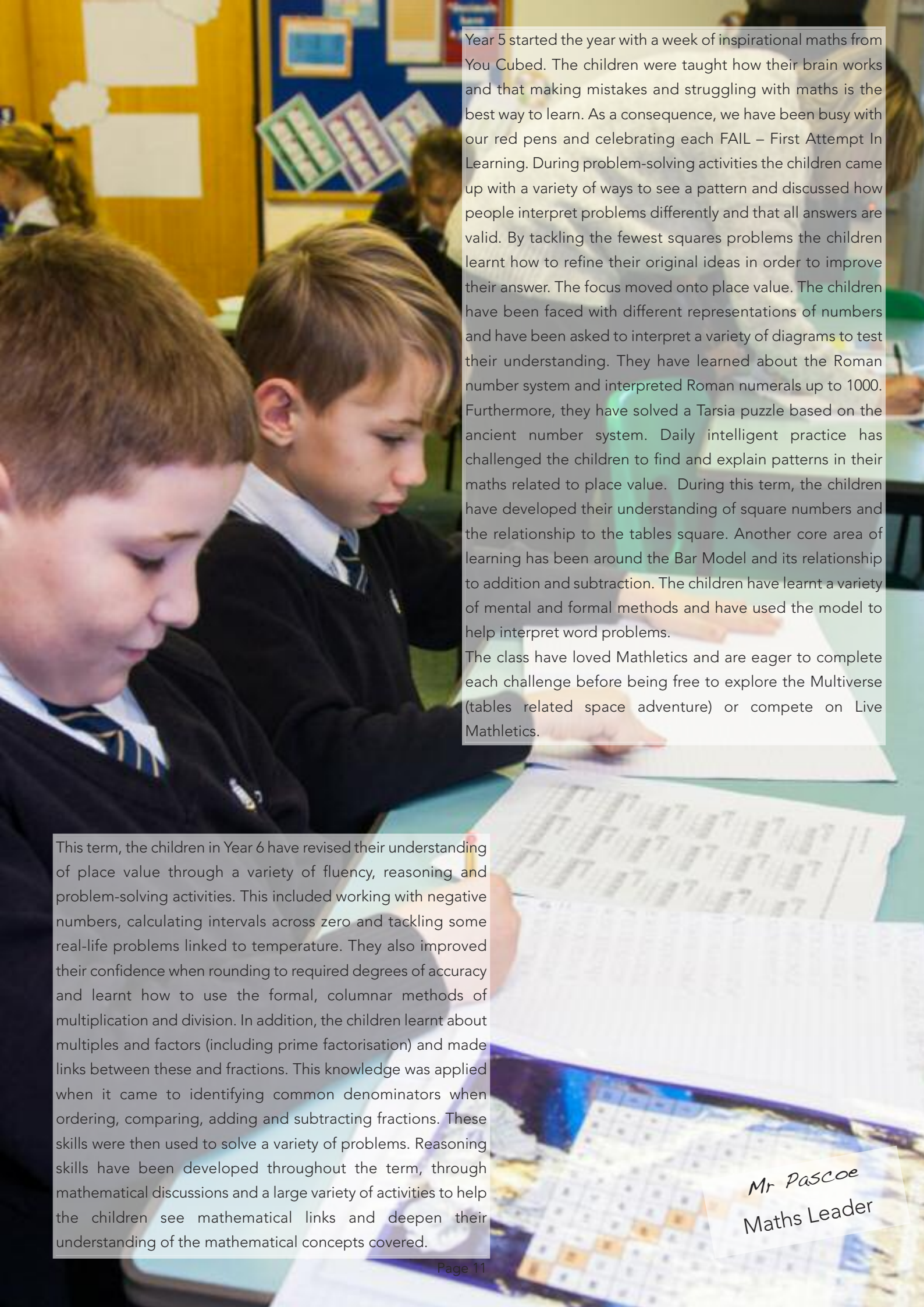
In Year 2, the children have had an exciting and challenging maths journey. Their first unit was place value, reading, writing and ordering numbers. There was lots of evidence of reflective enquiry and independent learning as the children demonstrated their skill and understanding. Next, the children looked at number: addition and subtraction. They recalled known facts to 20 and used related facts to 100. The children played Victorian number games to develop their addition skills using concrete objects alongside mental calculations; these were the games that they saw in the nursery at Lanhydrock House. Year 2 took on cross curricular reasoning and word problem solving challenges to deepen their understanding. The children were delighted to welcome family and carers into class for a maths morning. The children used inverse to add and subtract and used this to check answers and solve missing number problem. The next step of the children's mathematical learning journey was followed by measurement focusing on length and mass. The children chose and used appropriate standard units to measure and estimate length, height and mass to the nearest appropriate unit using rulers and scales. Week nine saw everyone exploring graphs. The term concluded with multiplication and division. The children have been so enthusiastic about club 99 and our new times tables challenges. They have transferred skills well and made impressive progress.

In maths, Year 3 have learned about the place value of 3-digit numbers (Hundreds Tens and Ones). The children have explored using base 10, counters and number lines to deepen their knowledge before learning how to add ones, tens and hundreds to a 3-digit number. Later in the term, Year 3 learned how to add and subtract using the formal column method and were able to solve a variety of words problems. The children have continued to practise and make progress with Club 99. The children have worked hard to improve their score in mental maths involving the four operations.

Year 3 have been learning the x3 x4 and x8 tables and revising x2, x5, x10. The children really enjoy the challenge of answering question in 10 minutes and they are determined to make progress. The children have been very enthusiastic about Mathletics. Homework tasks have been completed online and children have been deeply engaged in the variety of games and mental maths challenges. Some children have already achieved a bronze level award which has been very pleasing to see.

In maths, Year 4 have been learning how to recognise the value of each digit in a 4-digit number and learning how to order and compare numbers beyond 1000. The children have also been learning how to find 1000 more or less than a number, rounding to the nearest 10,100 or 1000 and recognising Roman Numerals. In the later part of the Autumn term, Year 4 have been working hard to learn how to add and subtract using columnar methods, together with solving one step and two step word problems. There has been some fantastic team work and problem solving in the classroom. As well as learning how to add and subtract up to 4-digit numbers, the children have been learning how to estimate their answer before working out the calculation. Year 4 have applied their knowledge of multiplying by 10, 100 and 1000 and the relationship between metric units to convert from larger to smaller units and the inverse.





Year 5 started the year with a week of inspirational maths from You Cubed. The children were taught how their brain works and that making mistakes and struggling with maths is the best way to learn. As a consequence, we have been busy with our red pens and celebrating each FAIL – First Attempt In Learning. During problem-solving activities the children came up with a variety of ways to see a pattern and discussed how people interpret problems differently and that all answers are valid. By tackling the fewest squares problems the children learnt how to refine their original ideas in order to improve their answer. The focus moved onto place value. The children have been faced with different representations of numbers and have been asked to interpret a variety of diagrams to test their understanding. They have learned about the Roman number system and interpreted Roman numerals up to 1000. Furthermore, they have solved a Tarsia puzzle based on the ancient number system. Daily intelligent practice has challenged the children to find and explain patterns in their maths related to place value. During this term, the children have developed their understanding of square numbers and the relationship to the tables square. Another core area of learning has been around the Bar Model and its relationship to addition and subtraction. The children have learnt a variety of mental and formal methods and have used the model to help interpret word problems.

The class have loved Mathletics and are eager to complete each challenge before being free to explore the Multiverse (tables related space adventure) or compete on Live Mathletics.

This term, the children in Year 6 have revised their understanding of place value through a variety of fluency, reasoning and problem-solving activities. This included working with negative numbers, calculating intervals across zero and tackling some real-life problems linked to temperature. They also improved their confidence when rounding to required degrees of accuracy and learnt how to use the formal, columnar methods of multiplication and division. In addition, the children learnt about multiples and factors (including prime factorisation) and made links between these and fractions. This knowledge was applied when it came to identifying common denominators when ordering, comparing, adding and subtracting fractions. These skills were then used to solve a variety of problems. Reasoning skills have been developed throughout the term, through mathematical discussions and a large variety of activities to help the children see mathematical links and deepen their understanding of the mathematical concepts covered.

Mr Pascoe
Maths Leader

This term, there has been an exciting and diverse range of science opportunities made available to the children. This has ranged from classroom based investigations, to outdoor learning, visits to areas of scientific interest including Nexus at Camborne Science and International Academy, in addition to guest speakers visiting our academy who have delivered engaging and inspirational workshops. The children have been immersed in science and as a result they have developed their scientific knowledge and understanding.

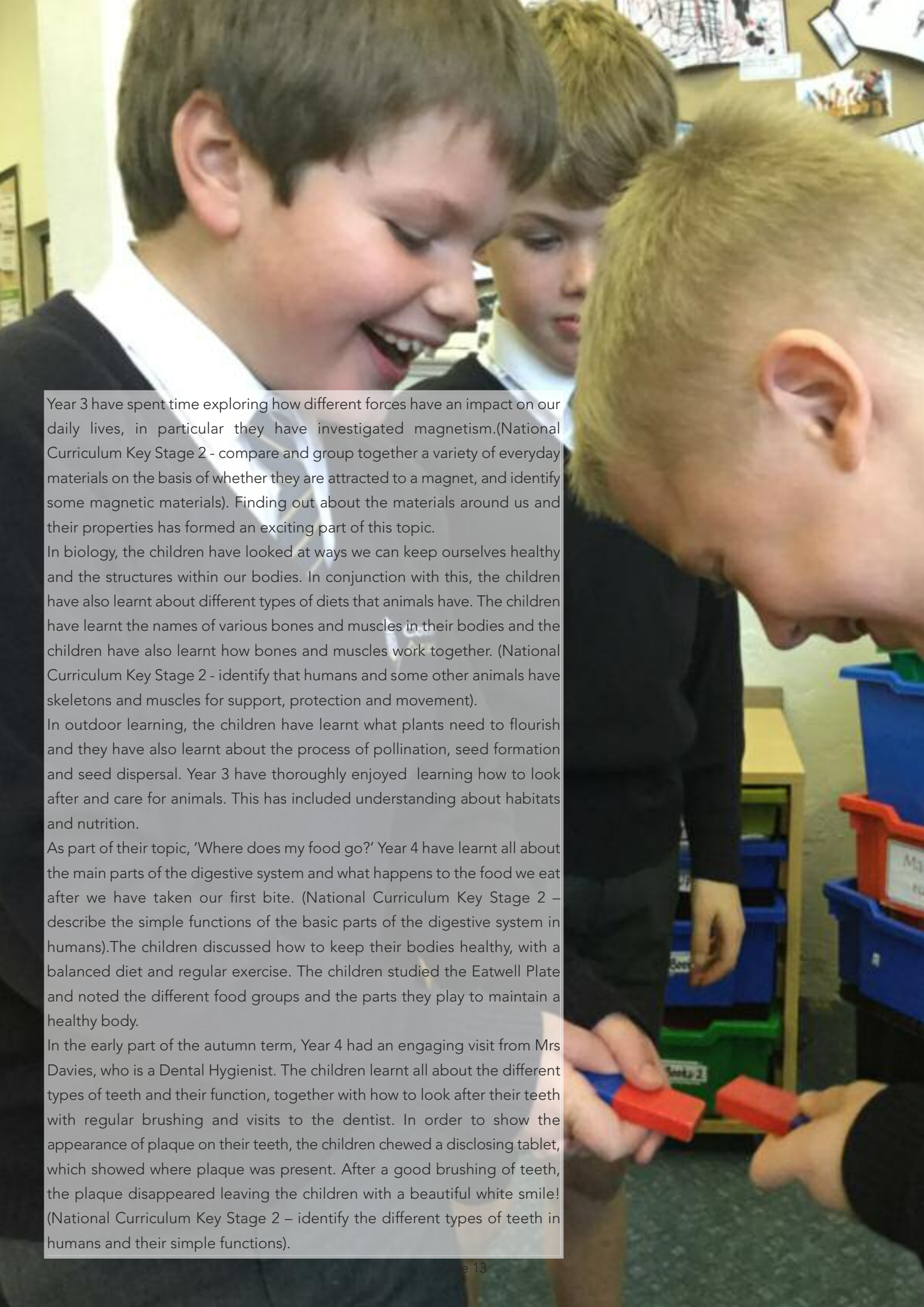
In Year 1, the first topic studied was; 'All about me'. The children focussed on 'Our Senses'. They looked at sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. The children looked at the important role of our senses and how we rely on these senses daily. The children went on a nature walk and identified the senses they use both inside and outside. They named and labelled the different parts of their body and the important job each part plays in our life. The children enjoyed singing a range of songs about their body. (National Curriculum Key Stage 1- asking simple questions and recognising that they can be answered in different ways).

The second topic studied was 'Materials'. Our children identified a range of common materials including wood, plastic, glass, metal, water and rock. They explored the school grounds and were able to use their knowledge learnt in class to identify a wide range of materials. (National Curriculum Key Stage 1 - observing closely, using simple equipment). The children were then able to sort materials into groups based on their properties.

In Year 2 our children have explored Science through the themes; What do I need to be me? and Through the Keyhole. The term began with the children exploring young animals of different species and identifying missing stages in an animal's lifecycle. Next children learnt about healthy foods and the importance of exercise and keeping active. They thought carefully and explored choices and joined in discussions to justify their choices. (National Curriculum, Key Stage 1 - Pupils should be taught to: find out about and describe the basic needs of animals, including humans, for survival).

During their theme, Through the Keyhole, the children learnt about materials. They identified and compared the uses of everyday materials during an exciting morning with parents. The children observed closely and recorded their findings on a table, listing materials and their properties. The next step in the children's learning journey was to compare features and items discovered on their class trip to Lanhydrock House and understand why certain materials are used for different items. The children used our outdoor area and feely bags to explore properties and computing to develop their understanding through images and video clips. The children concluded by identifying the difference between man-made and natural materials, devised tests and presented their findings. Their work was cross curricular and enhanced statistic work in maths.





Year 3 have spent time exploring how different forces have an impact on our daily lives, in particular they have investigated magnetism.(National Curriculum Key Stage 2 - compare and group together a variety of everyday materials on the basis of whether they are attracted to a magnet, and identify some magnetic materials). Finding out about the materials around us and their properties has formed an exciting part of this topic.

In biology, the children have looked at ways we can keep ourselves healthy and the structures within our bodies. In conjunction with this, the children have also learnt about different types of diets that animals have. The children have learnt the names of various bones and muscles in their bodies and the children have also learnt how bones and muscles work together. (National Curriculum Key Stage 2 - identify that humans and some other animals have skeletons and muscles for support, protection and movement).

In outdoor learning, the children have learnt what plants need to flourish and they have also learnt about the process of pollination, seed formation and seed dispersal. Year 3 have thoroughly enjoyed learning how to look after and care for animals. This has included understanding about habitats and nutrition.

As part of their topic, 'Where does my food go?' Year 4 have learnt all about the main parts of the digestive system and what happens to the food we eat after we have taken our first bite. (National Curriculum Key Stage 2 – describe the simple functions of the basic parts of the digestive system in humans).The children discussed how to keep their bodies healthy, with a balanced diet and regular exercise. The children studied the Eatwell Plate and noted the different food groups and the parts they play to maintain a healthy body.

In the early part of the autumn term, Year 4 had an engaging visit from Mrs Davies, who is a Dental Hygienist. The children learnt all about the different types of teeth and their function, together with how to look after their teeth with regular brushing and visits to the dentist. In order to show the appearance of plaque on their teeth, the children chewed a disclosing tablet, which showed where plaque was present. After a good brushing of teeth, the plaque disappeared leaving the children with a beautiful white smile! (National Curriculum Key Stage 2 – identify the different types of teeth in humans and their simple functions).



As part of their topic, 'Batteries Included,' the children had fun learning about electricity, what it is, how it is made and stored. (National Curriculum Key Stage 2 – identify common appliances that run on electricity) They then applied their understanding to a reading comprehension exercise about electricity.

Year 5 have been 'To the Stars.' They were delighted to be invited to an educational visit to Nexus where they were greeted by a huge planetarium. Upon entering its cavernous belly, the children were taken on a magical journey across the solar system. They learnt key facts about each planet and gained an understanding of the scale of our galaxy. Furthermore, the complete darkness provided an excellent opportunity for the class to see firsthand a demonstration of the causes of day and night. (National Curriculum Key Stage 2: Pupils should be taught to use the idea of the Earth's rotation to explain day and night and the apparent movement of the sun across the sky.) Upon emerging from the dome, the children were taught a mnemonic to remember the order of the planets before being presented with a challenge to make a scale model of the planets from Play Doh. The children worked collaboratively in order to follow the instructions and they all produced a scale model of our solar system. (National Curriculum Key Stage 2: Pupils should be taught to describe the Sun, Earth and Moon as approximately spherical bodies.) The children have learned how observations and scientific evidence

has been built up in order to prove that the Earth is a sphere. Reading comprehension activities in literacy have enhanced the children's understanding and they have learnt about the first brave men and women who explored space – the final frontier- and the resilience and motivation that training to become an astronaut requires.

As part of their topic 'A Voyage of Discovery' Year 6 have learnt about Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. (National Curriculum Key Stage 2 - To identify how animals and plants are adapted to suit their environment in different ways and that adaptation may lead to evolution). They have explored how to use dichotomous keys to classify animals and plants into broad groups. (National Curriculum Key Stage 2 - To give reasons for classifying plants and animals based on specific characteristics) This included a discussion about different habitats and food sources, and how various species have adapted over time in order to survive in these conditions. After examining the skull of a fox, they were able to identify the different features of this animal, including diet and whether or not it was likely to be a predator or prey.

Genetic's are something that we hear a lot about in the news. Our Year 6's have been learning about inherited and



acquired characteristics, and took their learning home to find out from whom they may have inherited particular characteristics, such as: hair/eye colour, ear lobe attachment/detachment, tongue rolling, etc. This led to some interesting discussions about variation within species. (National Curriculum Key Stage 2 - To recognise that living things produce offspring of the same kind, but normally offspring vary and are not identical to their parents).

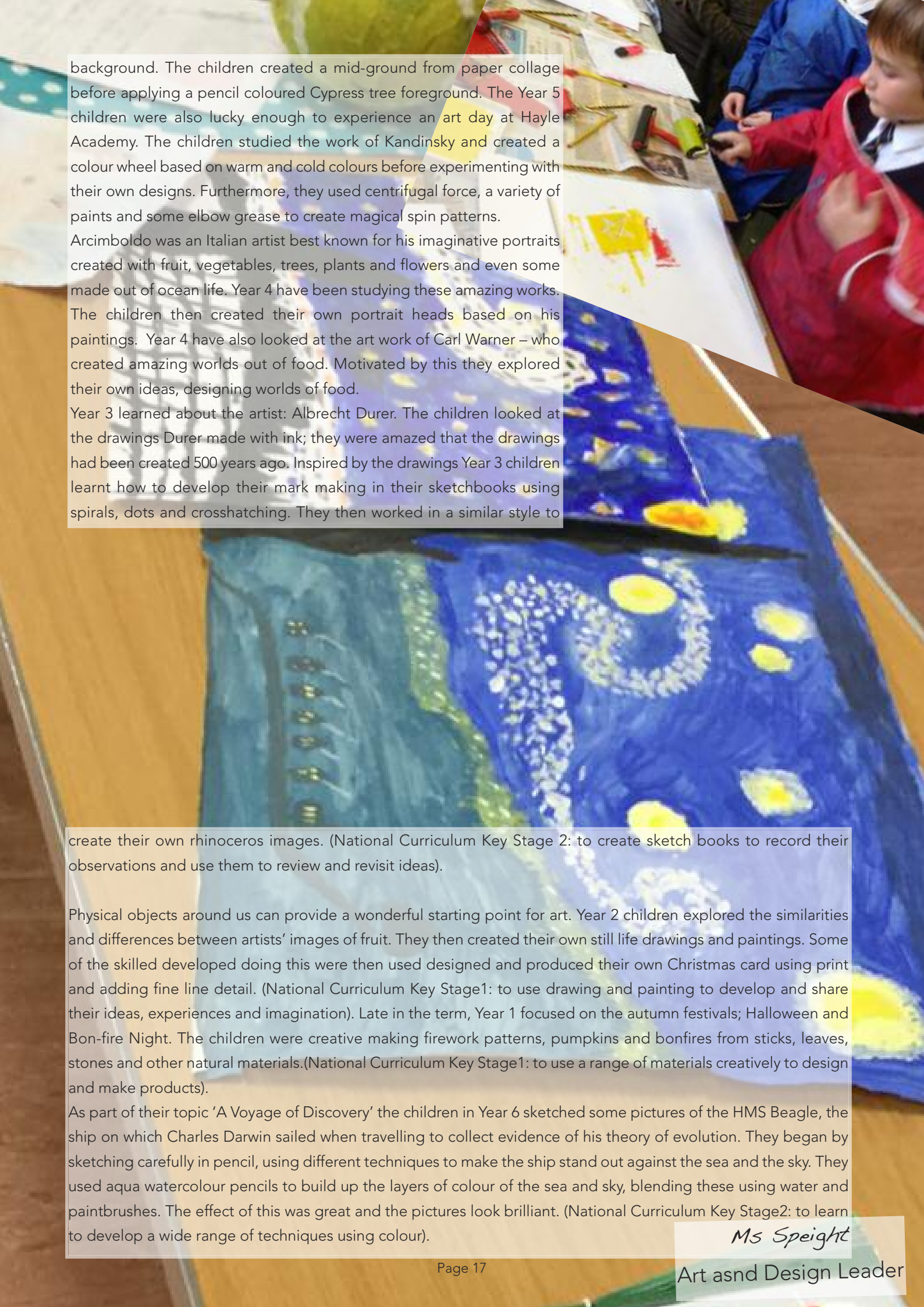
Mrs Eddy
Science Leader

Art and Design

All young children love to draw, yet all too often adults say that they can't draw. At Connor Downs, we encourage children to draw for the love of it, for a purpose and for experimentation. With our Doodle Fridays, children get the chance to practice and develop their techniques. Art and Design is not just about drawing and painting, it also teaches artistic 3d modelling.

Nature has been a real inspiration for our children this term. In Year 2, the children began by re-creating shapes and patterns found on animals. They made their own print tiles to make an accurate 3-dimensional version of the patterns in relief before printing the tiles as a 2-dimensional image. The children learnt how to mix printing inks to create colour and used print blocks to create repeat images of the animals. In Year 1 the children have been exploring the changing autumn season. They went on an autumn walk around the school, looking for signs of autumn and sketching these in our sketch books. This provided inspiration for an autumn collage using leaves and seeds found in the school grounds. Our Year 3's were also found using Cultivating Futures for their art. Inspired by the Stone Age period and cave paintings. The children worked with Mr. BD to make their own paints out of natural materials such as plants, mud and slate. The children had a fantastic experience mixing the paints and trying them out to see what colours they had created.

Observing great works of art and mimicking the techniques used by famous artists provides stimulus for the children at Connor Downs. In Year 5, the children have studied the work of Vincent Van Gogh linked to our topic "To the Stars". The children learned about the artist through reading comprehension activities in order to understand the background to the painting "Starry Night". The children researched the painting and found out how Van Gogh had composed the piece noting that he had made many sketches of the scene before creating his final masterpiece which reinforced our key value of resilience and showed how drafting work is a vital process. (National Curriculum Key Stage 2: to learn about the work of a significant artist). The children compared the painting to his other works e.g. "Starry night over the Rhone" and developed an understanding of how he created "turbulence" in his painting through his use of colour and thick application of paint. As Van Gogh used a variety of media the children experimented with replicating the scene in water colour pencils and then oil pastels. In their final piece, the children applied string to represent the turbulent flow across the night sky in swirls of PVA to provide a

A photograph of a classroom where children are engaged in art projects. In the foreground, a large blue painting with yellow and white circular patterns is visible. In the background, children are working at tables, some using paper collage and others using paint. A child in a red jacket is visible on the right side of the image.

background. The children created a mid-ground from paper collage before applying a pencil coloured Cypress tree foreground. The Year 5 children were also lucky enough to experience an art day at Hayle Academy. The children studied the work of Kandinsky and created a colour wheel based on warm and cold colours before experimenting with their own designs. Furthermore, they used centrifugal force, a variety of paints and some elbow grease to create magical spin patterns.

Arcimboldo was an Italian artist best known for his imaginative portraits created with fruit, vegetables, trees, plants and flowers and even some made out of ocean life. Year 4 have been studying these amazing works. The children then created their own portrait heads based on his paintings. Year 4 have also looked at the art work of Carl Warner – who created amazing worlds out of food. Motivated by this they explored their own ideas, designing worlds of food.

Year 3 learned about the artist: Albrecht Durer. The children looked at the drawings Durer made with ink; they were amazed that the drawings had been created 500 years ago. Inspired by the drawings Year 3 children learnt how to develop their mark making in their sketchbooks using spirals, dots and crosshatching. They then worked in a similar style to

create their own rhinoceros images. (National Curriculum Key Stage 2: to create sketch books to record their observations and use them to review and revisit ideas).

Physical objects around us can provide a wonderful starting point for art. Year 2 children explored the similarities and differences between artists' images of fruit. They then created their own still life drawings and paintings. Some of the skilled developed doing this were then used designed and produced their own Christmas card using print and adding fine line detail. (National Curriculum Key Stage1: to use drawing and painting to develop and share their ideas, experiences and imagination). Late in the term, Year 1 focused on the autumn festivals; Halloween and Bon-fire Night. The children were creative making firework patterns, pumpkins and bonfires from sticks, leaves, stones and other natural materials.(National Curriculum Key Stage1: to use a range of materials creatively to design and make products).

As part of their topic 'A Voyage of Discovery' the children in Year 6 sketched some pictures of the HMS Beagle, the ship on which Charles Darwin sailed when travelling to collect evidence of his theory of evolution. They began by sketching carefully in pencil, using different techniques to make the ship stand out against the sea and the sky. They used aqua watercolour pencils to build up the layers of colour of the sea and sky, blending these using water and paintbrushes. The effect of this was great and the pictures look brilliant. (National Curriculum Key Stage2: to learn to develop a wide range of techniques using colour).

Ms Speight

Computing

It is often said that the future is all about computing, and that robots and computers will take on many tasks we normally do. Looking at the world around us, it is easy to say that this vision of the future is already here. The role of computing in the curriculum is to enable our children to access today's technology and be future ready to access tomorrow's world.

When children learn about computing in school, we look at 3 broad aspects, the first and most important of these is to give children the skill, knowledge and understanding as to how to stay safe in our digital world. In some of their earliest adventures online at school, our children have been taught about keeping themselves safe by not giving out any personal information to people. We have also worked hard with our Year 1's to ensure that they know to tell a trusted adult if they see things that they don't like on the internet. (National Curriculum Computing KS1 to use technology safely and respectfully, keeping personal information private; identify where to go for help and support when they have concerns about content or contact on the internet or other online technologies).

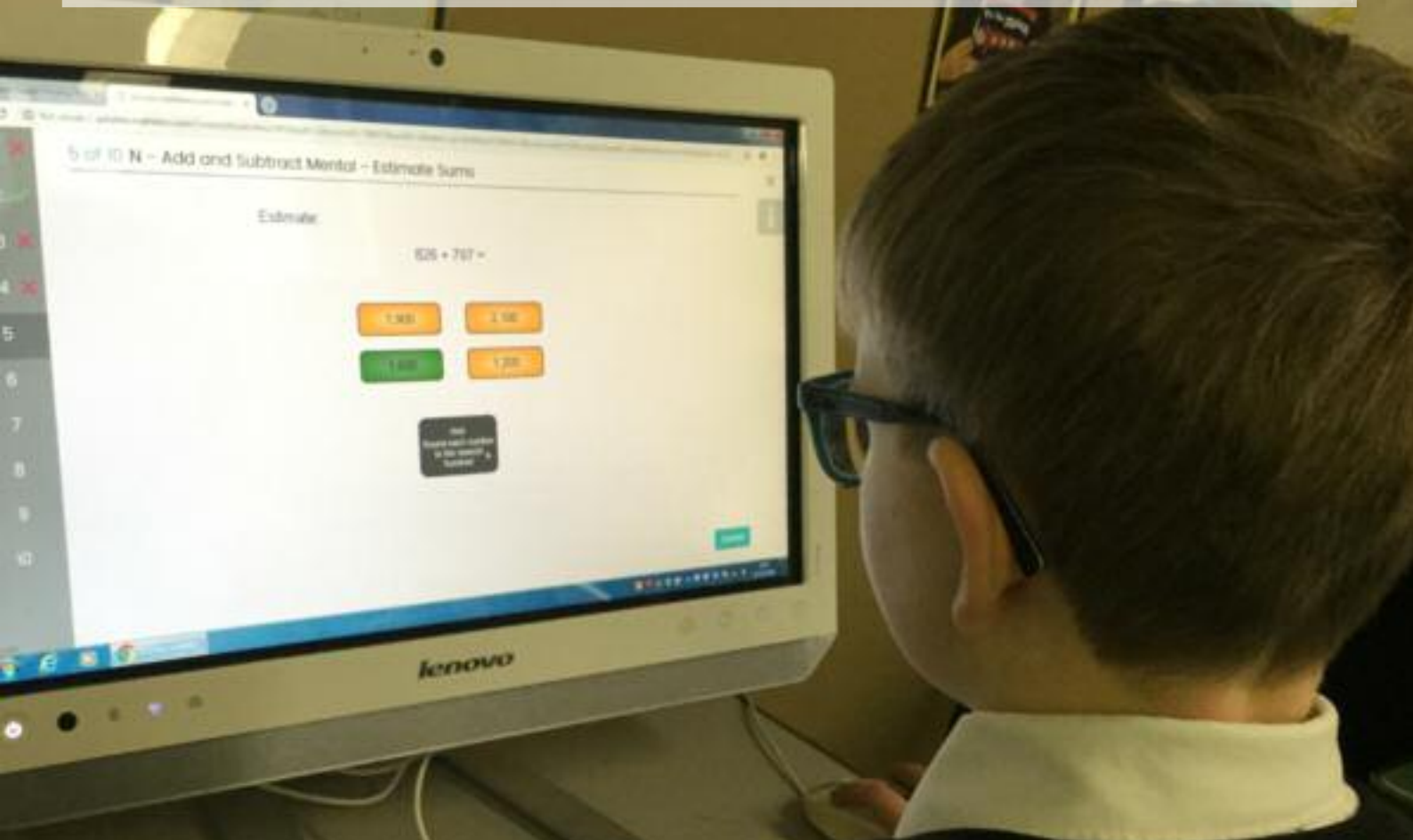
In Key Stage 2 we continue teaching internet safety. This term we have particularly focused on the risks of various social media sites, and ensuring that children are aware of the age restrictions that the majority of the sites have, and why they have them. The children in classes have attended an assembly about this, along with discussions in classes.

In Year 5, the children have made a pledge to use the internet responsibly and they understand what to do if they have a problem online (National Curriculum: Pupils should be taught to use technology safely, respectfully and responsibly).



The second aspect of computing that we teach covers the use of software and hardware. In Year 1 the children have enjoyed using the iPads each week. They have used various apps on them and are become familiar with basic instructions. One of the most common functions that we use a computer for is to search for information. The children in Year 1 have used google search, when learning about a range of animals. Linking with their English, Year 1 have also looked at authors and a range of Julia Donaldson characters from the stories we have been reading in class.

Geography has also provided fantastic computing for our Year 1's with the children using Google Earth, to locate the school. They first located the UK, then England, then Cornwall and then Connor Downs. The children were very keen to look for other areas of the world. The children are becoming more confident accessing Mathletics and Education City independently.



In Year 2, the children have been using technology purposely to create and store content. The children have written Bonfire Night acrostic poems and added images. They have presented their work to their friends and peer assessed each other's work. (National Curriculum KS1 to use technology purposefully to create, organise, store, manipulate and retrieve digital content). The children in Year 2 have written and sent a thank you letter to staff at Lanhydrock House and emailed a report of their visit to the company who kindly sponsored us with free transport for the day. They focussed on sending suitable and purposeful emails and developing awareness of appropriate language.

Moving into Key Stage 2, our Year 3 children have been improving their understanding of history, researching different historical giants of science. They have also used the internet to find out how life was very different in the Stone age, to the way that we live today. The children in Year 4 have also been using internet search engines to access information to support their writing. For example: the children used the internet to research King Alfred the Great and write a biography about him.

Our Year 5 pupils have enjoyed using "Google classroom" to access, edit and store their work. The children used the find, edit and replace functions to turn the story of Little Red Riding Hood into a space adventure called Zip Electron which linked with the space topic "To the Stars". By working collaboratively, the children were able to develop their language and writing skills alongside their ICT skills. This term has also seen the launch of Mathletics. The Year 5 mathletes have devoured their assignments and competed against their peers across the globe on "Live Mathletics". Some children have even ventured into the "Multiverse" to test their tables knowledge on a space adventure.

The final area of computing is coding. Both Year 3 and Year 5 have been using Scratch. Year 5 children learned to change backgrounds and sprites in the development of a space game. They have created routines and used coordinates to move an object on screen. The children in Year 3 looked at ways of personalising the characters in the games that they created, using colours and sounds. They then created a simple cat and mouse game, modifying their code to remove errors and also to make the game more playable. In Year 6, coding has been taught using the app 'A.L.E.X', the children created a code that could be used to show how to program the movements of the character on the screen. They recorded each step of the algorithm using symbols, addressing any errors they encountered along the way.

Programming is not all about creating and playing games however. Our Year 4 had a fantastic time learning how to make a Milo robot using the Lego Education programme. They then had a great time programming their robots to move along the floor in all directions. The children in the computing club have also spent time experimenting with the Lego, trying to create aware self-steering robots.

Mr B D
Computing Leader

Design and Technology

"Design and technology is a phenomenally important subject. Logical, creative and practical" James Dyson. Interictally interwoven with other subjects, yet a strong stand-alone area in its own right, design and technology skill are taught throughout Connor Downs Academy.

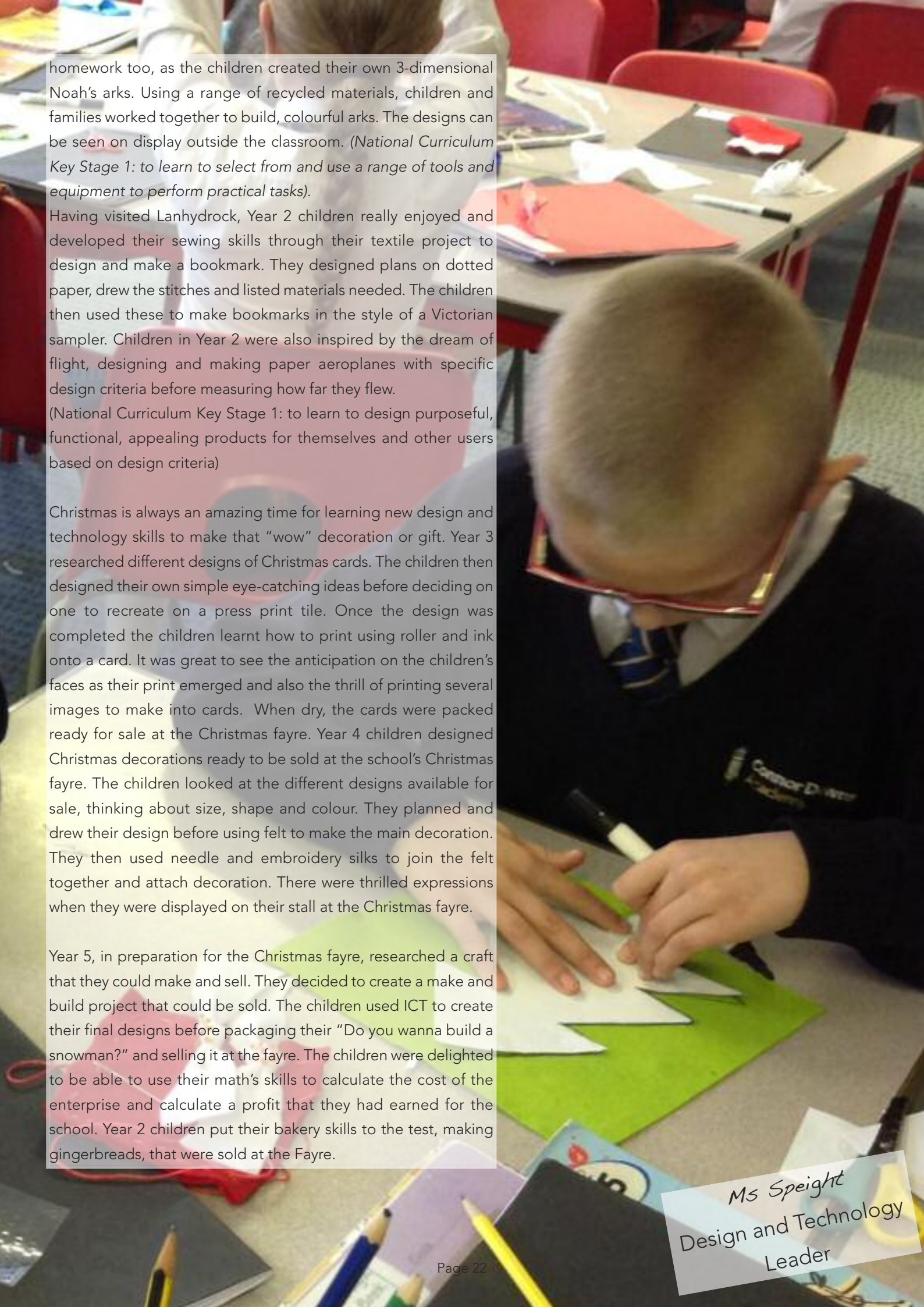
Bringing history to life, our Year 6 children designed T-shirts inspired by the ancient Egyptians. They drew their names in hieroglyphs. Using bold colours and a strong outline to ensure that their symbols stood out. Bright colours and a detailed background completed the design. These vibrant projects were then printed on to transfer paper and ironed onto white T-shirts. With lots of pride and laughter, the children finally took to the catwalk in a T-shirt parade to showcase their amazing, Egyptian designs. (National Curriculum Key Stage 2: to learn to design a product for a specific purpose).

Years 3 and 5 also reached back into the distant past for their inspiration. Year 5 researched Greek art, with the children studying the interesting designs underpinning Greek pottery. Having learnt about the historical significance of the pottery, the children formulated their own designs according to an agreed specification. The children experimented with a variety of tools to find the best technique to build a strong and stable vase that would match their design brief. When completed, the children evaluated their ideas against their own design criteria and considered the views of their



peers to improve their work. (National Curriculum Key Stage 2: to learn to select from and use a wider range of tools and equipment to perform practical tasks.) Year 3 went back even further in history, to the Stone Age. During their visit to Penlee Museum the children looked at the different designs on Iron and Bronze Age coins found in West Cornwall. They recreated the designs using simple ideas such as leaf patterns, animal shapes and spirals. Then the children drew the design on very thin copper to make an Iron Age style badge. (National Curriculum Key Stage 2: to learn to use research and develop design criteria to inform the design of appealing products that are fit for purpose, aimed at particular individuals or groups).

Biblical stories set Year 1 off on an adventure, through the story of Noah's Ark. They were inspired to paint pictures of the different animals, creating a large 3- dimensional display in the classroom. Working collaboratively, the children used collage materials to cut, join and stick the models together. The excitement with modelling continued into Year 1



homework too, as the children created their own 3-dimensional Noah's arks. Using a range of recycled materials, children and families worked together to build, colourful arks. The designs can be seen on display outside the classroom. (National Curriculum Key Stage 1: to learn to select from and use a range of tools and equipment to perform practical tasks).

Having visited Lanhydrock, Year 2 children really enjoyed and developed their sewing skills through their textile project to design and make a bookmark. They designed plans on dotted paper, drew the stitches and listed materials needed. The children then used these to make bookmarks in the style of a Victorian sampler. Children in Year 2 were also inspired by the dream of flight, designing and making paper aeroplanes with specific design criteria before measuring how far they flew.

(National Curriculum Key Stage 1: to learn to design purposeful, functional, appealing products for themselves and other users based on design criteria)

Christmas is always an amazing time for learning new design and technology skills to make that "wow" decoration or gift. Year 3 researched different designs of Christmas cards. The children then designed their own simple eye-catching ideas before deciding on one to recreate on a press print tile. Once the design was completed the children learnt how to print using roller and ink onto a card. It was great to see the anticipation on the children's faces as their print emerged and also the thrill of printing several images to make into cards. When dry, the cards were packed ready for sale at the Christmas fayre. Year 4 children designed Christmas decorations ready to be sold at the school's Christmas fayre. The children looked at the different designs available for sale, thinking about size, shape and colour. They planned and drew their design before using felt to make the main decoration. They then used needle and embroidery silks to join the felt together and attach decoration. There were thrilled expressions when they were displayed on their stall at the Christmas fayre.

Year 5, in preparation for the Christmas fayre, researched a craft that they could make and sell. They decided to create a make and build project that could be sold. The children used ICT to create their final designs before packaging their "Do you wanna build a snowman?" and selling it at the fayre. The children were delighted to be able to use their math's skills to calculate the cost of the enterprise and calculate a profit that they had earned for the school. Year 2 children put their bakery skills to the test, making gingerbreads, that were sold at the Fayre.

Ms Speight
Design and Technology
Leader

Geography

The aim of Geography at Connor Downs Academy is to give the children a wider perspective on their world and to provide the beginnings of an understanding of the human situation.

Alongside important geographical knowledge of people, places and events, children are encouraged to develop transferable skills which they can use across the curriculum and in later life, such as perceptive questions, thinking critically and weighing evidence. Also, by stimulating their interest of other places children develop an awareness of themselves in relation to their community and the part they can play in it.

Throughout the year annual events, such as World Aims Week allow the children to be immersed in the learning within a rich and effective environment. During World Aims Week we focus on learning for a better world and increase understanding that we have a part to play as responsible citizens. The week involves lots of cross-curricular events, team building, location studies, survival challenges and human rights.

This term, during the topic 'The Big Build', the children from Year 1 began their geography learning by looking at an aerial view of our school. They then looked more closely at the layout of the inside of school and then moved to their classroom. The children all made a map of the classroom, identifying key features of the room. They have thoroughly enjoyed reading the story 'The Gruffalo's Child'. From this story the children looked at the journey the Gruffalo's child made into the wood. Children sequenced their route from the start of the story to the end. They looked at the detail they needed to include from the pictures in the book and also following a story sequence.

In geography, Year 2 have learnt to use aerial photos, to recognise familiar buildings and use a map with symbols and a key. The children, skilfully, used maps to find routes from different locations to the school and drew routes using directional language. Computing and google Earth was used to develop the children's skills and understanding. Next they used maps to navigate their way around the school grounds and immediate area. The children then located the four countries of the UK and their capital cities and compared their maps to those shown on a website as they tracked Santa's journey across the world and identified countries he will visit. (National Curriculum Key Stage 1: to use world maps, atlases and globes to identify the United Kingdom and its countries).





This term, Year 3 have focussed on local human geography seeing how settlements have developed, looking at some of the layouts that you could have found in historic ones.

Linked to their theme Set In Stone the children have used an ordnance survey map to locate Connor Downs and Penzance, They used coordinates to locate ancient sites such as Carn Euny and Chysauster . The children are also learning to locate the names of European countries when reading an atlas.

Year 4 have enjoyed learning about volcanic activity. The children read a news extract about the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull Volcano in Iceland, studied the workings of the volcano and have seen the negative and positive impact it had on people who live near it. The children have also studied countries on a world map and have learnt that the Vikings travelled from Norway, Sweden and Denmark to many countries including Britain, Iceland and the Middle East for the purposes of settlement and trading. (National Curriculum Key Stage 2: human geography, including: types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water).

In geography Year 5 have been on holiday! Through a mystery suitcase activity, the children have compared and contrasted two holiday destinations: the South Aegean Islands and the Hebrides. They have explored geographical similarities and differences through the study of human and physical geography in these regions. The children have researched the locations on the internet and written a blog complete with photographs about the areas. They have also studied the climate, tourist attractions and travel routes before summarising their learning in a postcard home.

As part of their topic, 'A Voyage of Discovery', Year 6 children studied the different biomes in the world. They conducted independent research looking at the landscape, wildlife, climate and location of these biomes. Using this information, they created fact files to present their information. During their Ancient Egyptian topic 'Who's the Mummy?' the children learnt about the River Nile and the important part it played in the lives of this fascinating civilization. Using atlases, books and the internet, the children researched Egypt as it is today, focusing on cultural factors such as tourism, cuisine, climate and wildlife. Non-chronological reports were then written to present what they had learnt about the country. (National Curriculum Key Stage 2: to use maps, atlases, globes and digital/computer mapping to locate countries and describe features studied).

History

The aim of history at Connor Downs Academy is to give the children a wider perspective on their world and to provide the beginnings of an understanding of the human situation.

Alongside important historical knowledge of people, places and events, children are encouraged to develop transferable skills they can use across the curriculum and in later life, such as perceptive questions, thinking critically and weighing evidence.

Also, by stimulating the children's interest of other times and places children develop an awareness of themselves in relation to their community and the part they can play in it.

Throughout the year annual events, such as Historical Fun Friday allow the children to be immersed in the learning within a rich and effective environment. Staff and children 'become' people from different times and places, researching costume, culture, beliefs and origins that extend their learning beyond the classroom.



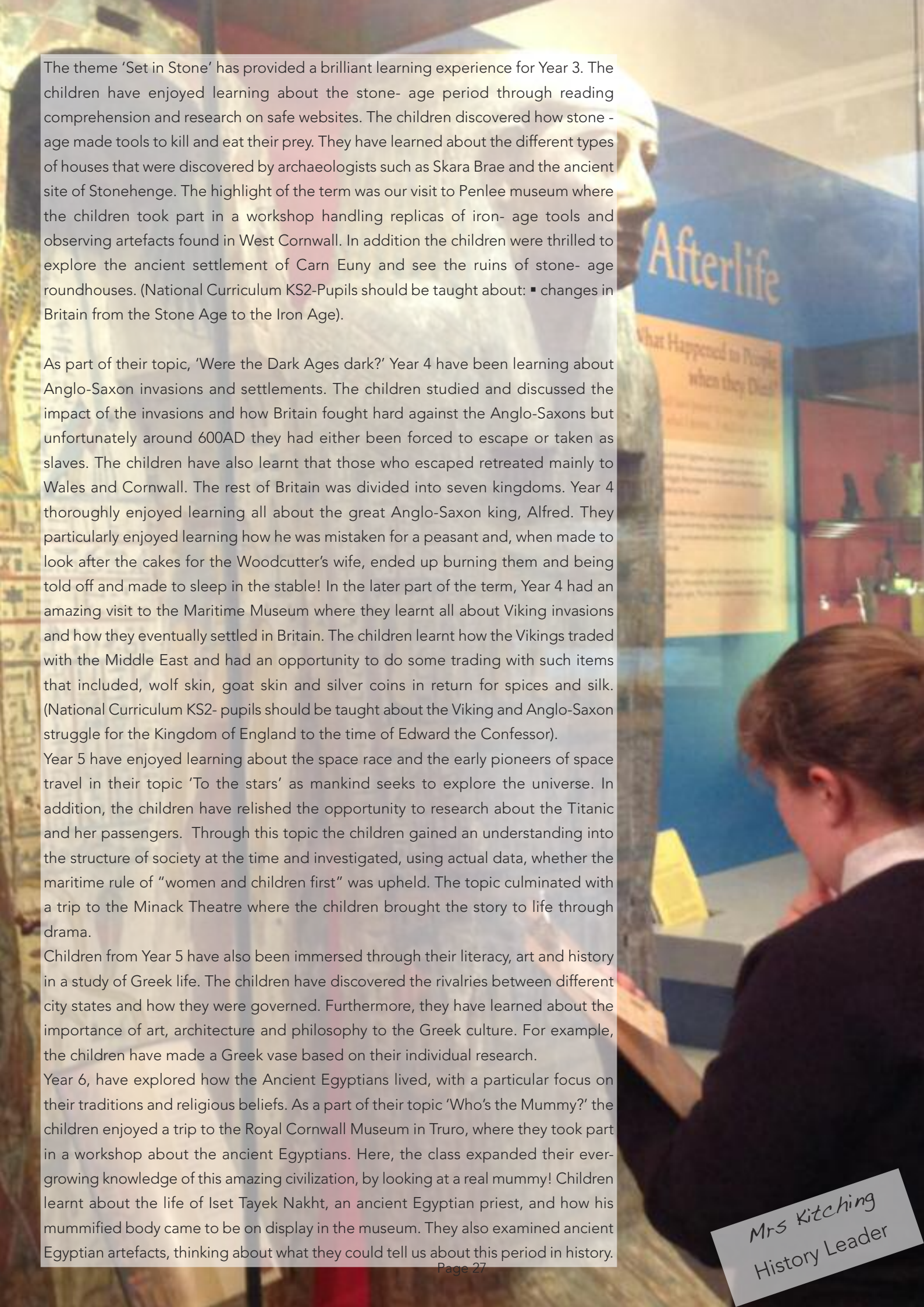
On Sunday 11th November, Connor Downs Academy was invited to attend a special Service of Remembrance at Hayle War Memorial. Many children and families took part. Our Head and Deputy Head Boy and Girl in addition to class school councillors and other children from our community attended. The children laid a wreath to remember our fallen heroes on behalf of the pupils, staff, families and community of Connor Downs Academy. As a school we value the significance of this occasion in our lives and have learnt a lot from our annual participation. We were incredibly proud of the respectful way all our children took part and very much valued sharing this special event with the wider community. (National Curriculum - to understand the lives of significant individuals in the past who have contributed to national and international achievements. To learn about significant historical events, people and places in their own locality).

Back in school, during the Year 1 theme 'All About Me', the children looked at what school life was like in the past, making them think about their lives now compared to those of earlier generations. The children enjoyed learning about how different the school day was many years ago. (National Curriculum KS1-Pupils should be taught about: ■ changes within living memory. Where appropriate, these should be used to reveal aspects of change in national life).

In Year 2 the children's history learning journey began with the launch of their theme 'Through the Keyhole' and an inspiring trip to Lanhydrock House. The aim was to find out about significant historical events, people and places in our locality. The children identified and compared features of buildings and objects from the past and present, talked about the history of the building and posed questions and learnt how these can be answered through examining a variety of evidence. The next theme Flying High developed the children's skills further as they learnt about the story of the Wright brothers, created timelines of the history of flight and identified the qualities of successful inventors in history. The children's history learning was cross curricular the children also studied significant historical events including Guy Fawkes and Remembrance.

Year 3 have also looked at some historical figures in physics, learning how they have helped to develop our understanding of Forces.





The theme 'Set in Stone' has provided a brilliant learning experience for Year 3. The children have enjoyed learning about the stone- age period through reading comprehension and research on safe websites. The children discovered how stone - age made tools to kill and eat their prey. They have learned about the different types of houses that were discovered by archaeologists such as Skara Brae and the ancient site of Stonehenge. The highlight of the term was our visit to Penlee museum where the children took part in a workshop handling replicas of iron- age tools and observing artefacts found in West Cornwall. In addition the children were thrilled to explore the ancient settlement of Carn Euny and see the ruins of stone- age roundhouses. (National Curriculum KS2-Pupils should be taught about: ■ changes in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age).

As part of their topic, 'Were the Dark Ages dark?' Year 4 have been learning about Anglo-Saxon invasions and settlements. The children studied and discussed the impact of the invasions and how Britain fought hard against the Anglo-Saxons but unfortunately around 600AD they had either been forced to escape or taken as slaves. The children have also learnt that those who escaped retreated mainly to Wales and Cornwall. The rest of Britain was divided into seven kingdoms. Year 4 thoroughly enjoyed learning all about the great Anglo-Saxon king, Alfred. They particularly enjoyed learning how he was mistaken for a peasant and, when made to look after the cakes for the Woodcutter's wife, ended up burning them and being told off and made to sleep in the stable! In the later part of the term, Year 4 had an amazing visit to the Maritime Museum where they learnt all about Viking invasions and how they eventually settled in Britain. The children learnt how the Vikings traded with the Middle East and had an opportunity to do some trading with such items that included, wolf skin, goat skin and silver coins in return for spices and silk. (National Curriculum KS2- pupils should be taught about the Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle for the Kingdom of England to the time of Edward the Confessor).

Year 5 have enjoyed learning about the space race and the early pioneers of space travel in their topic 'To the stars' as mankind seeks to explore the universe. In addition, the children have relished the opportunity to research about the Titanic and her passengers. Through this topic the children gained an understanding into the structure of society at the time and investigated, using actual data, whether the maritime rule of "women and children first" was upheld. The topic culminated with a trip to the Minack Theatre where the children brought the story to life through drama.

Children from Year 5 have also been immersed through their literacy, art and history in a study of Greek life. The children have discovered the rivalries between different city states and how they were governed. Furthermore, they have learned about the importance of art, architecture and philosophy to the Greek culture. For example, the children have made a Greek vase based on their individual research.

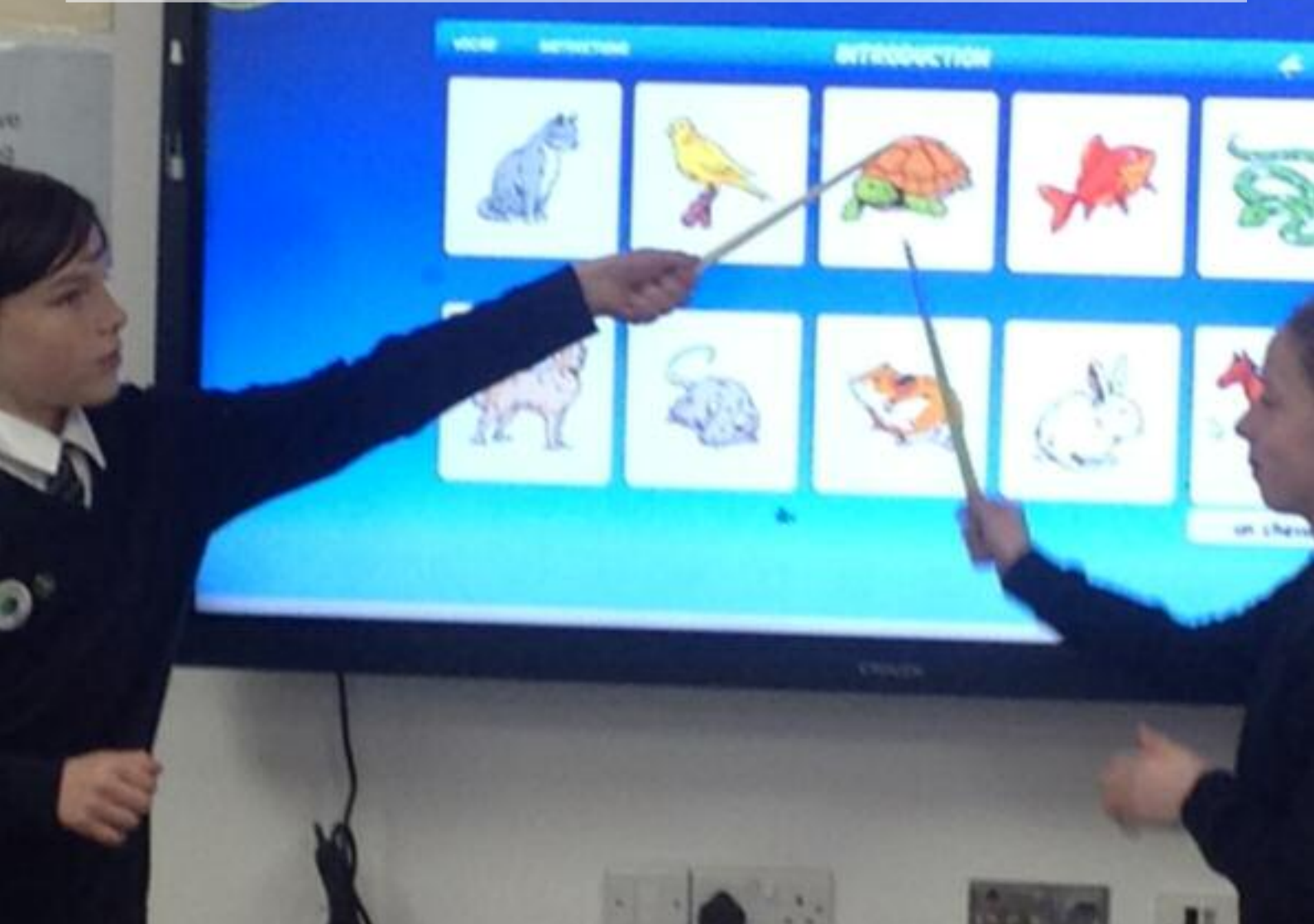
Year 6, have explored how the Ancient Egyptians lived, with a particular focus on their traditions and religious beliefs. As a part of their topic 'Who's the Mummy?' the children enjoyed a trip to the Royal Cornwall Museum in Truro, where they took part in a workshop about the ancient Egyptians. Here, the class expanded their ever-growing knowledge of this amazing civilization, by looking at a real mummy! Children learnt about the life of Iset Tayek Nakht, an ancient Egyptian priest, and how his mummified body came to be on display in the museum. They also examined ancient Egyptian artefacts, thinking about what they could tell us about this period in history.

Foreign Languages

We have again been fortunate to have a specialist languages teacher from Camborne Science and International Academy provide regular French lessons for our children in Key Stage 2. Using interactive games and resources, as well as practical speaking exercises, Monsieur Watkinson has brought the French language alive for our pupils.

Being their first experience of French lessons, the children in Year 3 have been excited and challenged to listen to the teacher, who speaks mostly in French throughout each session. They have learnt to read and pronounce French vocabulary relating to numbers and days of the week. The children have also learnt basic greetings and how to say goodbye.

As part of their topic, 'Where does my food go?', Year 4 have learnt how to say which foods they enjoy and were able to identify different types of French food, including 'le pain au chocolat' and 'la confiture'. They have also learnt how to greet one another, say where they live and how old they are. Year 4 have learnt how to respond to the dinner register in French,



by stating what they would like for school dinner. For example, 'Je voudrais option gris' for I would like option grey (packed lunch). Year 4 have also learnt the words to identify family members such as les parents (parents), le père (dad) and la mère (mum) noting the use of the masculine and feminine determiners le and la.

Years 5 and 6 have been learning how to present information about themselves in French. They began by learning some basic French greetings, which they practised in pairs, working hard to use the correct pronunciation. The next step was learning how to introduce themselves and deliver information, such as their name and age, with confidence. To develop their speaking skills further, the children were also taught the corresponding questions, which enabled them to converse with their partners. Reading and writing skills were developed through recording their personal information in French, then reading it back to the French teacher, using appropriate intonation and pronunciation.

The children have also learnt how to ask questions about pets and can now explain which pets they have themselves. This was taught through a variety of games and activities which the children found fun and engaging.



Language Club

This popular club has run for both KS1 and KS2 this term. The children were able to practise their growing speaking and listening skills through French conversation, focusing on greetings and talking about themselves, stating things such as their names, ages and giving information about their families.

After making some French flags, some of the children enjoyed perusing some French books, trying hard to translate some of the vocabulary, using pictures and their growing knowledge of the French language (as well as French dictionaries) to help them. They have also learnt to count to 50 in French, through a variety of games which took place both indoors and outdoors. Colours and songs were also learnt through energetic and engaging games.

Around the Christmas period, the children made French Christmas cards, using dictionaries to find the correct language for their greetings.

At the end of each cycle of clubs there was a tasting session, where the children had the opportunity to try some French cheeses with crackers, croissants and pain au chocolat. They were taught how to say what they liked and didn't like and were encouraged to express these feelings with correct pronunciation and intonation. They all absolutely loved this activity and it was great to see them sampling foods from another culture.

Mrs Law
Foreign Languages
Leader

Music

Ella Fitzgerald states, so wonderfully, 'The only thing better than singing is more singing!' and this is definitely something we, at Connor Downs Academy, adhere to. Whether we are singing and dancing at our music night event or performing our Christmas shows, we love to sing and sing some more! Here is what has been happening during the autumn term. In Reception, the children have had a wonderful time learning how to sing as an ensemble and performed 'Under the Sea' so beautifully on our music nights. As well as singing, the children enjoy playing a range of instruments and have been learning how to keep in time to the rhythm and beat.

In Year 1, the children thoroughly enjoy singing, both in class and on stage. The children have put on some fantastic performances with their energetic rendition of Footloose for music night. They have used their voices expressively and creatively by singing a range of different songs during the Key Stage 1 Nativity. The children have also enjoyed playing a range of musical instruments. They played loud and quiet sounds, quick and slow sounds and have tried to keep to a rhythm and have listened to a range of music linked to the seasons, using instruments to make the sound of rain, snow and sunshine. Year 2 began their music journey by learning to sing tunefully and understand elements of pitch, tempo and dynamics. The children listened carefully to music to identify these elements and say how different music makes them feel. The children matched pictures to music and explained their choices to others. Next, they performed in the music night in front of family and friends exploring all these elements. Through their theme 'Through the Keyhole' the children considered how music can be used to tell a story. They listened to The Nutcracker Suite by Tchaikovsky and noted how the music matches various toys. (National Curriculum Key Stage 1: Pupils should be taught to: Use their voices expressively and creatively by singing songs and speaking chants and rhymes.)





Year 3 have enjoyed learning the words and dancing to the rhythm of their chosen song for music night, 'Little Shop of Horrors'. It was fantastic to see the children enjoying and moving to the beat. Year 4 had a wonderful time learning how to sing in two different keys and keep the tempo of the music to 'Revoltin' Children' from the musical, 'Matilda'. Their performance of the song on music night was outstanding and they were able to sing with a backing track. Year 4 learnt how to warm up their voices and practise their breathing so they could hit those high notes! To prepare for their KS2 carol concert, year 4 have been learning how to copy a given scale to warm up their voices. For both music events they have learnt and performed their songs from memory. Year 4 have also learnt how to sing along to a given rhythm and tempo. They now know how to sing in time to the music and will practise their new skills by singing to songs with a faster rhythm.

Year 5 have been busy this term learning lyrics and performing their chosen song for music night, 'Any Dream will Do', from the musical 'Joseph and the Technicolour Dreamcoat'. The children have learnt how to sing and have understood pitch, tone and the amount of beats in a bar. The focus in Year 6 has been singing. As part of the annual music event, the children learnt the song 'The Greatest Show' from the popular film musical 'The Greatest Showman'. After listening carefully to the different sections of the song, the children practised singing using appropriate pitch, tone and volume. This was quite tricky in parts, as the song contains some high notes, but with resilience and determination, they kept practising and gave a super, show-stopping performance.

(National Curriculum Key Stage 2: Pupils should be taught to: Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using their voices...with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression.)

The children in Reception and KS1 had a wonderful time learning and performing their Nativity and later in the term sang beautifully at their Christingle service. KS2 sounded wonderful at their Christmas carol concert, filling Phillack church with angelic voices. Each year group were given a carol to learn, sing and perform in front of a congregation of family and friends. Our thanks go to Phillack church for hosting both the Christingle and the Christmas carol concert, to Josh Patterson who played the organ so incredibly well and to Mrs Burden for her beautiful brass playing.

Mrs Patterson
Music Leader

Outdoor Learning

What an amazing term of exploration and discovery it has been for our children in outdoor learning. Outdoor learning is an intrinsic part of daily life here at Connor Downs Academy and all our children value the time they have to learn environmental science, animal husbandry, geography, technology and ecology.

As part of Muddy Mondays, children in Year R have been exploring Cultivating Futures, discovering mini beasts and learning how to use garden tools safely. They have also been observing the change in seasons and weather. Children have been learning how to care for our rabbits, collecting eggs laid by our chickens and feeding our frogs and fish. They particularly enjoyed finding out what lives in our pond through pond dipping.



Children in Years 1 and 2 have been learning about gardening by taking part in the Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) 'I Can Grow' campaign, collecting seeds, harvesting vegetables and fruit as well as sowing new seeds. They have also been digging to find out what lies beneath our feet in Cultivating Futures and observing the weather, including the changes in the seasons where we live. They have identified a wide variety of birds, discovered invertebrates, while pond dipping, and sketched using natural materials like soil, leaves and flowers.

Year 3 children have been finding out about the importance of plants in our diet, learning about the parts of plants while investigating what plants need to grow healthily. They took part in our autumn invertebrate survey during October and recently in a planting bulbs campaign to brighten up Britain for spring. Our children also learnt about orienteering and using co-ordinates through using a compass. Year 4 children have been learning about living things and their habitats, gaining a deep understanding of vertebrates and invertebrates. They have also gained knowledge about how to care for animals through hands on activities with our animals and are actively taking part in the RSPCA's 'Compassionate



Class' where they learn about empathy and compassion. During November, they also discovered what lives in our pond during our pond dipping sessions.

Year 5 children have been discovering what makes our weather so diverse by observing and recording data from thermometers, rain gauges and anemometers. They have compared climates around the world, learnt about weather forecasting and how clouds form. They have also been exploring Cultivating Futures, participating in team games and caring for our animals. A group of our Year 5 children have also recently become 'Animal Cadets'.

Year 6 children have been learning about plants, while conducting different scientific investigations. They have also been participating in team games, making pencils and brushes from natural materials before sketching using paints mixed from soil, leaves, compost and flowers. Recently a group of Year 6 children began learning about innovation and design through the James Dyson project to promote engineering. This will continue after the Christmas holidays.

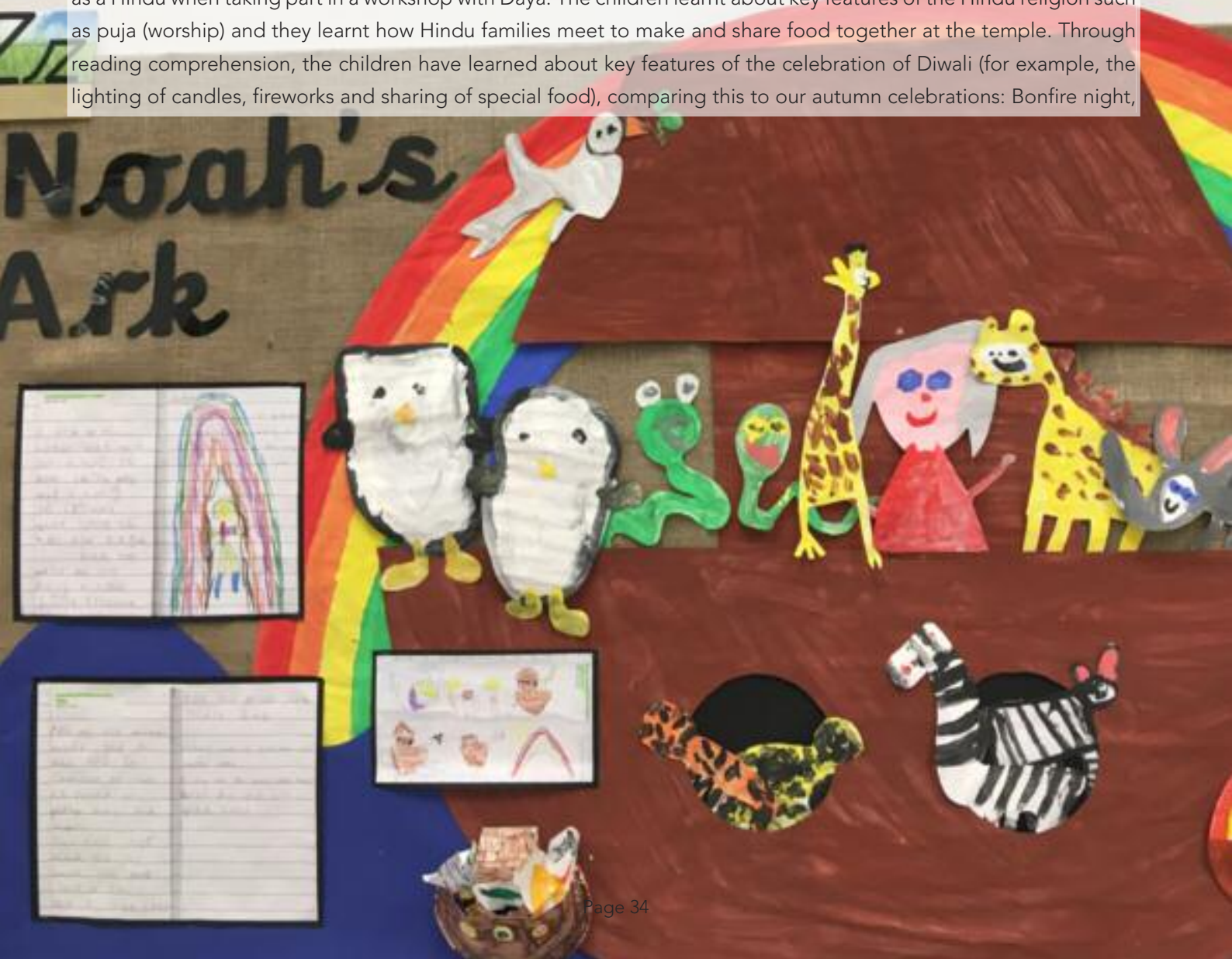
Mr Costello
Outdoor Learning
Leader

Religious Education

At Connor Downs Academy, we follow the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus for R.E. Over the course of the year, the children study Christianity, other world religions and Curriculum Kernewek. During the autumn term, each year group has continued in their work in these areas. This work is supported by visits from Open the Book (who lead our assemblies), visits to Phillack Church to celebrate key points in the school year and visits to support our learning. During the Christmas season, the children in Reception and KS1 took part in a Christingle service and the children in KS2 took part in their Carol Concert.

Year R have been continuing their Understanding Christianity unit of work focusing on God and Creation. They have learnt that Christians are taught to respect and care for God's name in the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. The children thought about things that are special to them and how they treat them with care. They revisited the story of Creation from the Bible and considered ways in which they can care for the world they live in and people who live in it. The children in Year 1 have enjoyed learning all about the story of Noah's Ark. They have sequenced the story, written the beginning, middle and end, and acted out parts from the story. They have painted a range of pictures of the different animals and created a large 3D display in the classroom. The children were very creative during a homework task, designing and making their own 3D arks. In Year 2, the children have been learning to tell stories from the Bible and recognise links with key concepts such as good news and thankfulness. They have given clear accounts of Bible text and thought, talked and asked questions whilst exploring ideas. The children thought about things their families do to show their love for them and thought about a selection of short prayers whilst learning about the most important examples of prayers to say and why.

Year 3 have learned about the significance of the parable 'The Good Samaritan' from the Bible. The children have discussed how the moral of the story could help Christians live their lives today. Year 3 learned about the everyday life as a Hindu when taking part in a workshop with Daya. The children learnt about key features of the Hindu religion such as puja (worship) and they learnt how Hindu families meet to make and share food together at the temple. Through reading comprehension, the children have learned about key features of the celebration of Diwali (for example, the lighting of candles, fireworks and sharing of special food), comparing this to our autumn celebrations: Bonfire night,





Halloween, Christmas and New Year. Year 4 have been learning about Islam and Christianity. The children have learnt about Hajj, the fifth pillar of the Islam religion, understanding that Hajj is a pilgrimage to Mecca that Muslims undertake at least once in their lifetime. The children read a diary entry about a young girl's Hajj experience and answered comprehension questions in response. In the early part of the autumn term, Year 4 were also visited by Daya, who taught the children about the five pillars of Islam and how important these were the everyday life of a Muslim. As well as studying Islam, the children have been learning about how and why Christians celebrate Advent, together with the birth of Jesus. In Year 5, the children have been learning about Sikhism. They have read about the places of worship (Gurdwara) that are important to Sikhs and discussed their findings with the group. The children have sequenced key events in the life of Guru Nanak and they now have a greater understanding of the importance of his teachings. When Daya visited Y5, she brought with her traditional clothes for the children to try on and she explained their significance. Once properly attired, the class were asked to role play part of a Sikh ceremony as a great opportunity to learn about the Guru Granth Sahib. The children learned about the importance of langar (common meal) as part of the strong sense of community shared by Sikhs. Daya was able to demonstrate some Sikh cooking before the children sat down to share a meal, which was delicious! After learning about evolution through their topic 'A Voyage of Discovery' and learning about creation through some 'Understanding Christianity' activities, Year 6 considered the differing opinions and ideas about how our world was created. In small groups, they respectfully discussed the material and information available to them, posing interesting questions about each theory. Later, they created a table to record some of their questions, which were shared during a class discussion. As part of a reading comprehension exercise, the children learnt about festivals around the world. The focus was mainly on the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah, but other 'Festivals of Light' which take place around the world, such as Diwali, were also explored.

Mrs Patterson
Religious Education
Leader

Early Years Foundation Stage

Class R have completed their first term in Reception at Connor Downs Academy! Mr Masters and the entire YR team would like to give a huge 'firework clap' to the children for all of their enthusiasm and hard work this term. The children have all settled well into school life since joining us in September and they have all made very good progress across the entirety of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.

Prime Areas:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development:

This term, our aim has been to support the children during their transition to school; ensuring that the children arrive at school each morning happy, enthusiastic and eager to learn. To promote this, we have focused on enabling the children to establish positive relationships underpinned by the values of both our classroom and our wider school community. Through collaborative circle time activities, teacher-led inputs and their participation in school events, the YR children have successfully integrated into life at Connor Downs Academy. We recognise and celebrate our differences; we are able to discuss our feelings and why we may feel a certain way; we understand that we are all a team and that we must always be kind, honest and try our best to support one another.



Physical Development:

This term, our children have been afforded a fantastic range of opportunities to develop their fine motor and gross motor skills. During our 'Playful Learning' time, the children have explored the ways in which they can develop their fine motor skills. They have practised handling tweezers and mark making tools to exercise their muscles at the 'finger gym'. They have created and subsequently manipulated playdoh using skills such as kneading, squeezing and rolling. In addition to this, the children have also learnt how to hold a pencil using an effective tripod grasp. This has supported their ability to form cursive letters correctly and with confidence. In preparation for our P.E. lessons, the children have practised dressing and undressing themselves independently. Through this our children have become adept at a range of tricky skills, such as fastening and unfastening shoes, zips and buttons. In our P.E. lessons, focusing on basic gymnastic skills and the importance of safe practice, we have explored the ways in which we can move our bodies. We have also observed and discussed how exercise affects our bodies, identifying why exercise is good for us. For example, the children recognise and can explain the importance of drinking water after exercising in order to stay healthy.



Communication and Language:

Throughout the Autumn term, our children have enjoyed developing their communication and language skills during our daily circle time. During these sessions, the children are encouraged to share their thoughts, interests and learning with one another. This enables Mr Masters to model new vocabulary to the children whilst allowing them to develop their independence and confidence as communicators. At the beginning of the school year and the second half of the term respectively, the children applied their communication and language skills to choose two topics to centre their learning around. These topics were 'Superheroes' and 'Under The Sea'. These topics were chosen by children as a result of their emerging interests and were reflected upon during circle time discussions. By allowing them to take control of their learning in this way, the children have displayed genuine enthusiasm towards all aspects of their learning. In turn, this has generated some wonderful conversations wherein the children ask questions, share ideas and stories, give and respond to instructions, and explain their reasoning.

Specific Areas:

Literacy:

Through our daily phonics sessions, the children have been introduced to phase 2 of the phonics scheme 'Letters and Sounds'. This scheme is taught in conjunction with the mnemonic songs of 'Jolly Phonics' and the cursive letter formation rhymes of 'Read Write Inc.' Where possible, we have linked our learning topics to our work in phonics, in order to generate excitement and enthusiasm amongst the children. For example, during our 'Superhero' topic, the children chose to read the story of 'Supertato'. The story's villain, 'The Evil Pea', was later photographed taking a letter from our classroom. A mysterious note was left for the children, who then applied their phonic knowledge to stop 'The Evil Pea' by identifying that it was the 'p' sound that had been taken.



Our children have enjoyed applying their phonic knowledge to write for a range of purposes. For example, during our 'Under The Sea' topic, the children chose to draw different sea creatures from the story 'Commotion in the Ocean' and then wrote accompanying labels. Following the children's interests further, our home corner was adapted to facilitate role play involving food shopping. The children then chose to compile their own shopping lists by independently writing phonetically plausible words and, in some cases, sentences.

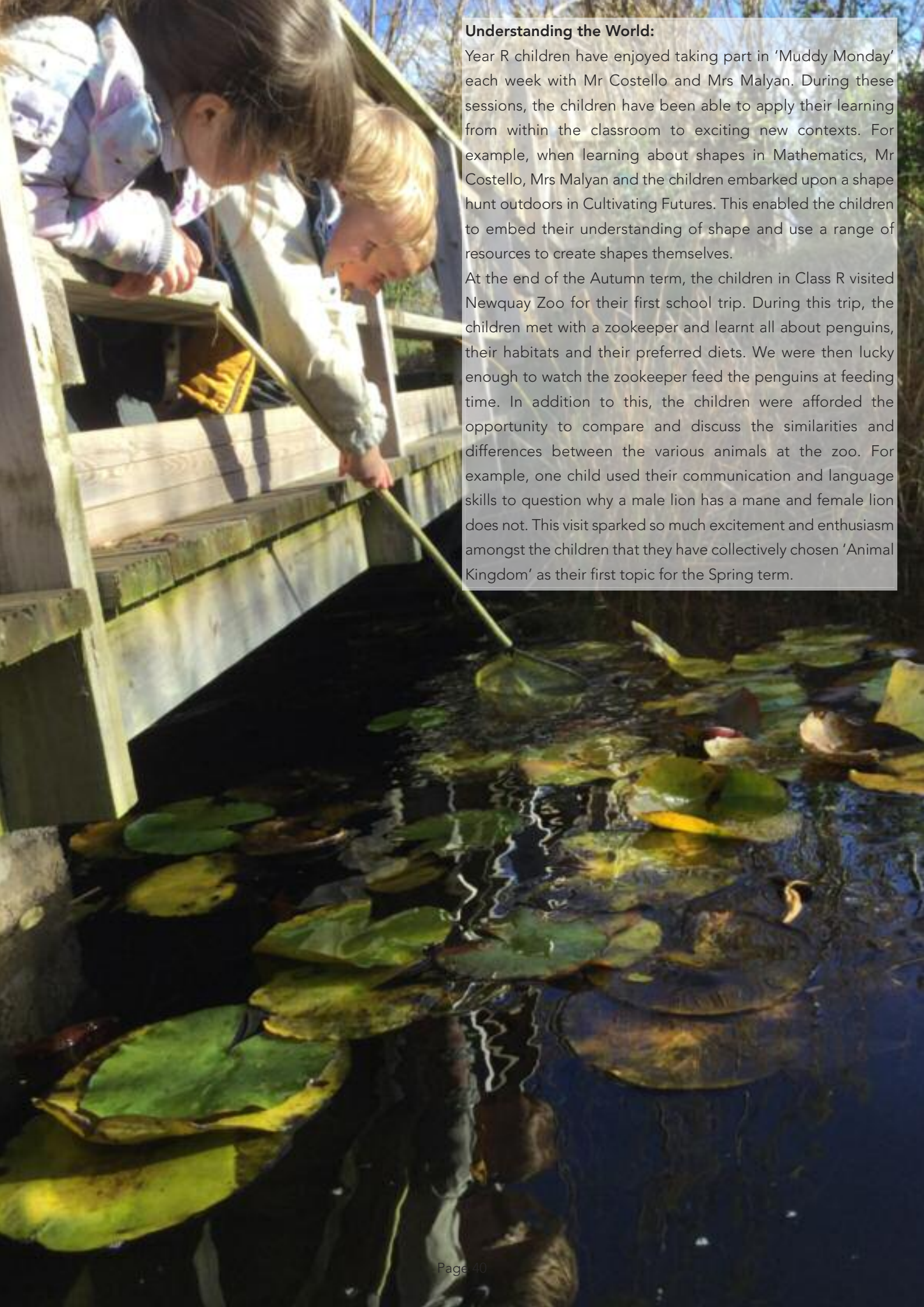
When writing, whether independently during 'Playful Learning' or with Mr Masters, the children consistently aim to write in cursive script, and all recognise that print is read from left to right, top to bottom, and should always stay on and within the lines of a page. The children have produced writing of such outstanding quality, we have regularly visited other classrooms around the school to share the children's work with their older peers.



Mathematics:

In Mathematics this term, we have spent a considerable amount of time focusing on numbers to 10. This has enabled the children to consolidate their understanding of basic number principles and has developed their confidence as mathematicians. The children recognise that number is an abstract idea and that numerals are one of the many ways in which a number can be represented. For example, when exploring the number 2, the children considered the various ways in which 2 could be represented. The children chose to explore Numicon, money, oral counting, writing numerals and quantifying sets of objects and actions.

During our morning registration each day, the children take turns using a range of time language to sequence the events of the day. For example: "First is the register" and "in the middle of day it's lunch time". We have also used descriptive language and practical activities to explore the properties of 2D shapes. The children have enjoyed performing the 'subitise rap', wherein they apply their knowledge of number to verbally identify how many objects are in a set of objects. When exploring simple addition, we chose to take our learning outdoors to take part in 'Kung Fu Maths'; this enabled us to develop our gross motor skills whilst acting out number sentences using a sequence of actions.



Understanding the World:

Year R children have enjoyed taking part in 'Muddy Monday' each week with Mr Costello and Mrs Malyan. During these sessions, the children have been able to apply their learning from within the classroom to exciting new contexts. For example, when learning about shapes in Mathematics, Mr Costello, Mrs Malyan and the children embarked upon a shape hunt outdoors in Cultivating Futures. This enabled the children to embed their understanding of shape and use a range of resources to create shapes themselves.

At the end of the Autumn term, the children in Class R visited Newquay Zoo for their first school trip. During this trip, the children met with a zookeeper and learnt all about penguins, their habitats and their preferred diets. We were then lucky enough to watch the zookeeper feed the penguins at feeding time. In addition to this, the children were afforded the opportunity to compare and discuss the similarities and differences between the various animals at the zoo. For example, one child used their communication and language skills to question why a male lion has a mane and female lion does not. This visit sparked so much excitement and enthusiasm amongst the children that they have collectively chosen 'Animal Kingdom' as their first topic for the Spring term.



Expressive Arts and Design:

From the beginning of the school year, the children in Class R have consistently enjoyed listening to a range of music. From nursery rhymes, phonic and mathematics songs, to Disney songs and even classical music. This prompted Class R to choose 'Under The Sea' from Disney's 'The Little Mermaid' as their performance number for Music Night. The children worked collaboratively to learn both the lyrics of the song, as well as a sequence of accompanying dance moves. The children's performance of the song was sensational and was praised by staff and children throughout the school. Throughout the term, the children have been encouraged to develop and explore their own creative ideas. They have considered the ways in which colour and media can be combined to create new shades and textures. For example, during our 'Under The Sea' topic, the children chose to design their own versions of 'The Rainbow Fish' by using glue, scissors and various materials to create a colourful collage. In addition to this, the children have worked alongside Mr Masters to create their own role play areas within our classroom. This term our role play areas have been a 'Superhero Den', an 'Under The Sea Cave' and, mostly recently, 'Santa's Workshop'. The children have taken great pride in creating these role play areas and, as a result, have used them to engage in some fantastic role play activities. The children regularly utilise the resources available within the role play areas to create and innovate exciting narratives in their play.

Physical Education and Sport

Being active is an essential part of life and learning to use the correct techniques when doing so is important, as it allows the activity to take place safely and enables those participating to gain a greater level of enjoyment and satisfaction from their own performance.

Physical Education at Connor Downs can be very much seen as two distinct areas, activities that take place within lessons, and those that take place in competition or training for competition.

For the youngest children in the school, we have been concentrating on developing the skills, that allow children to understand how their bodies can move and the basic techniques needed for future games.

Our reception children have been practising their movements, both using different body parts and in the style of different animals. We have been using the apparatus to learn how to travel safely and in control.

In Years 1 and 2 the children have focused on key ball skills such as catching and passing. They have discussed the correct technique and how they can progress with their skills. The children have also participated in gymnastics this term, working on balance using a range of different body parts. This has been done both on mats and on the apparatus. In recent weeks children have also developed their skills, showing different ways of travelling and climbing. They have also learnt how to do a forward roll.

Year 3 and 4 have enjoyed a term of football and rugby. In football they focused on dribbling, how you find space and ensuring the ball is kept under close control. There was also time spent on passing and shooting. For rugby finding space and getting past an opponent by changing body direction and position is a key skill that was developed. Central to both sports is making good decisions of who to pass to, as well as how to defend and attack, and this is something that has improved significantly. Dribbling, lay ups and shooting are key skills for basketball. Year 5 have spent this term, learning skills and tactics of basketball. They have learnt to dribble by bouncing and the different types of pass. The children put these skills to the test in game situations, linking together these actions at an increasing pace. They have also played dodgeball, working out how you find space and throw accurately, and how you catch.

Dance was the first area of focus for Year 6 this term. Working in small groups, they choreographed short routines to a section of the song 'The Greatest Showman'. They worked collaboratively to develop and included some excellent original dance moves in their sequences. Listening carefully to the music, they ensured their dance steps were performed in time with the music.

The Year 6 children have also learnt some hockey skills. Beginning with finding out how to control the ball with the hockey stick, weaving in and out of cones and travelling at speed whilst maintaining control, the children then moved onto learning how to attack and defend effectively. Once these factors were in place, they progressed to playing games, combining their newly acquired skills with confidence.





Residential Visits

Athlete visit

This term we had a visit from the Welsh High Jumper Rob Mitchell. Rob has competed at the Commonwealth games and brought his medals to school. He worked with all of the children in the school before leading an assembly for the children where he talked about the steps to make it as an athlete and about well-being. He shared some funny stories too. Jumping some of our gym equipment was a real wow moment and provided inspiration for children throughout the school. We are very grateful to all who participated and collected sponsorship. We hope in the future that one of our very talented pupils may return to Connor Downs as a professional sports person.

The Daily Mile

The daily mile has now become an important part of school life, encouraging the children of the benefits of being active every day. The children's fitness will continue to develop as the mile is completed each day; sport also has a positive impact on concentration and our well-being.

Vox dance

We have been delighted to introduce Vox dance to work with our Year 4, 5 and 6 children in dance club this term, performing both street and contemporary dance. It has been amazing to watch the children's skills develop and see the fascinating routines they have been practicing. Next term there will be the opportunity for Year 2 and 3 to attend dance and reception and Year 1 will in the summer, as well as a Key Stage 2 cheerleading club.

Cross country

This term we have taken our runners to both Mounts Bay and St Ives. They have performed brilliantly in cold conditions, with top ten places registered by Ruby, Charlie, Taya, Esme and Ashton D. Lots of the children have improved in the second race or on last year's performance. In the spring term, there will be races at Hayle and Cape Cornwall.

Football

Our girls team started the season in emphatic style, winning 9-0 in the cup versus Marazion. The whole team played well, with goals shared around amongst Taya (3), Lacey (3), Esme, Ebony and Gracie. In the next round the girls will face either St Michaels or St Ives.

The boys team have faced Marlborough twice in the cup. Away they lost 3-0 in a tightly fought game that could have gone either way. The home game sadly succumbed to the weather. We also faced Gwinear in the league, winning by 7 goals to 0. The boys played some truly superb football-scoring some of the best team goals in a long time. Jac (3), Frankie (2), Kian (2) scored the goals.



Gymnastics

Some of our gymnasts attended a competition run by Camborne Science and International Academy. Esme, Gracie, Ruby and Taya all attended and gave a great account of themselves. They competed in floor, body management and vault. All four performed brilliantly, with Ruby coming second overall; a great achievement when competing against mainly Year 6 children.

Multi skills

Our Year 1 children attended a multi skill festival at Camborne Science and International Academy, where they were able to develop their throwing, catching, running and balance skills in a range of activities, supported by the Camborne sports leaders.

Mr Kay
Sports Leader

Nativity

This year the children in EYFS and Key Stage 1 put on a magical performance of 'Christmas with the Aliens'. The traditional Christmas story being retold to some alien visitors who found themselves stranded on Earth with their broken spaceship. When invited by a group of school children to watch their nativity play, the aliens discovered an amazing story they wanted the whole universe to hear.

The children in EYFS and Key Stage 1 were fantastic on stage. The children thoroughly enjoyed singing the upbeat Christmas songs and being part of such a wonderful production. Year 2 were incredible at learning their lines and performing so confidently on stage. Thank you to parents/carers for helping with costumes and taking time to support children to learn scripts at home.



Mrs Bartaby
Key Stage 1 Leader

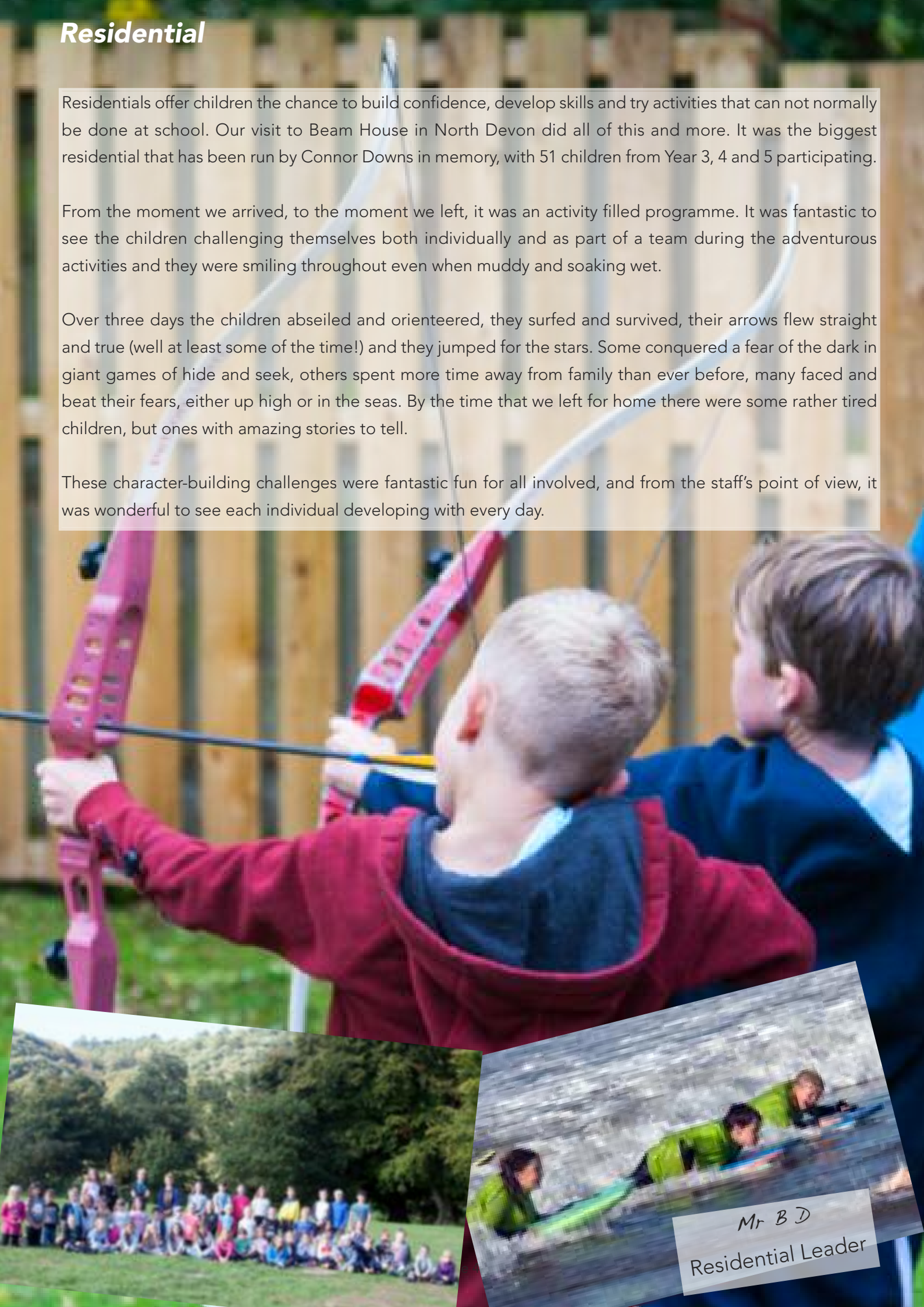
Residential

Residentials offer children the chance to build confidence, develop skills and try activities that can not normally be done at school. Our visit to Beam House in North Devon did all of this and more. It was the biggest residential that has been run by Connor Downs in memory, with 51 children from Year 3, 4 and 5 participating.

From the moment we arrived, to the moment we left, it was an activity filled programme. It was fantastic to see the children challenging themselves both individually and as part of a team during the adventurous activities and they were smiling throughout even when muddy and soaking wet.

Over three days the children abseiled and orienteered, they surfed and survived, their arrows flew straight and true (well at least some of the time!) and they jumped for the stars. Some conquered a fear of the dark in giant games of hide and seek, others spent more time away from family than ever before, many faced and beat their fears, either up high or in the seas. By the time that we left for home there were some rather tired children, but ones with amazing stories to tell.

These character-building challenges were fantastic fun for all involved, and from the staff's point of view, it was wonderful to see each individual developing with every day.



Mr B D
Residential Leader

This term has been busier than ever!

Pupil Premium

As noted in our last Ofsted report, Connor Downs staff have high expectations for all pupils at our school who are eligible for the government's Pupil Premium funding. To help us to be aware of effective strategies we can use to support our pupils, as Pupil Premium champion at Connor Downs in June 2018 I attended the National Pupil Premium Conference in London. The conference provides a great opportunity for agencies including Ofsted, the Education Policy Institute and previous Pupil Premium Award-winning schools to share good practice with Pupil Premium Leads from schools throughout the country. In November, I was able to cascade this information to other Pupil Premium Champions in our Aspire Multi Academy Trust.

Inclusion Support

This term, in order to inform us of how we can support pupils with a wide range of different needs, myself as Inclusion Leader for Connor Downs, and other staff accessed Mentally Healthy Schools training, the Cornwall Domestic Abuse support service launch and attended the Cornwall Council Cognition and Learning Annual Conference. In addition, I have attended excellent training from the Child in Care Virtual School and have accessed advice and resources from the Family Plus Team. We find that accessing training from a range of agencies and organisations and being aware of the latest research helps us to keep on improving our provision, so that we know we are supporting our pupils using the most effective strategies and approaches.

Trevictus games

In the second half of this term a group of our pupils attended the first ever "Winter Trevictus Games" at Camborne Science and International Academy. This was an amazing opportunity for all who were involved, giving them a chance to participate in lots of different activities, building confidence, raising self-esteem and developing understanding. There were some real wow moments during the afternoon as children tried new and adventurous activities for the first time.

Friends of Connor Downs Academy



The Friends of Connor Downs Academy have had a busy term. As a group we work closely with the school, looking for different ways in which we can provide support, some of this is obvious, some is behind the scenes. As a separate organisation to the school, we sometimes find ourselves able to access funding that the school can not. Over the past few months we have been successful at gaining a grant to allow us to install a rainwater collection system for Cultivating Futures. We should see the first parts of this arriving in the New Year. This collection system will significantly reduce the amount of mains water that is needed for watering the plants and will enable the school to get the water to the plants with greater ease. We have also put in a bid to a funder, that could see the school's energy usage become more sustainable. We have raised money for a defibrillator, in conjunction with Gwinneer Gwithian Parish Council, to be installed at the school, this can now be seen just outside of the school office and is available for the school and people in the community to use in an emergency.

The children have also seen some direct benefits from our fundraising with a new selection of play equipment being provided for use at lunchtimes and playtimes. We have also raised money for new books to benefit the whole school community.

The disco's we run for the children are busier than ever and enjoyed so much. We have also just held our Christmas Fayre, and it was fantastic to see all of those who turned up to support us. We really appreciated the efforts that the classes had put in to help with this.