Curriculum newsletter Spring term 2024

It has been a fantastically busy spring term for all of the children and teachers at Knowl Hill CE Primary school. We have lots to celebrate from the children's hard work across the term.



EYFS

EYFS got he Spring term off to a flying start with their topic 'Come Fly With Me Asia'. Here they learnt about the countries of China and India. They learnt about famous landmarks from both countries such as the Taj Mahal, and the Great Wall of China.



The children learnt about Lunar new year, and with 2024 being the year of the dragon, they used their creativity in many ways to create clay dragon eyes, dragon masks and puppets. They used these to make their own Lunar New year Dragon dances.

The children learnt that, in China, the characters for writing are different from the ones we use int eh UK and they were able to have a go at writing their names in Mandarin.





As part of their learning about the cultures and traditions of India, the children learn that Holi is a popular and significant Hindu festival celebrated as the Festival of Colours, Love, and Spring. They had a lot of fun taking part in their very own Holi colour run!

The 'come fly with me' India topic, inspired foundation's Bollywood dance for the dance extravaganza and we are all so proud of how the children performed at Braywick Leisure Centre on the day.



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After half term, the children started a new topic called ‘Animal Crackers’. They learnt about Pets and how to take care of them by making sure they have everything that they need. The children were visit by Richard Best, a local vet and friend of the school, and his pet Corgi Dorcus. Richard showed the children a timeline of Dorcus’ life and talked about the important job of a Vet in making sure our pets stay healthy.







The children also learnt about farm animals, they learnt that animals, such as horses have often worked on the farms to pull heavy loads, but that this is less common now due to more modern farming equipment such as tractors and combine harvesters.

The children ere visited by Mrs Smith and her , horse to talk about how to care for a horse, what to feed it, how to groom it and make sure it has enough exercise.

At the end of term, the children visited Odds Farm for their first big school trip! They heard from the team about the process of milking a Jersey cow and they were all so excited to see the new piglets, and lambs who had recently been born at the farm.





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Years 1 & 2

This term, year 1 and 2 have been amazed by their topic of 'Frozen Kingdom'. The children loved learning all about the Arctic circle and the people who live there. They began the topic with some creative experiments looking at freezing and melting. They made some frozen art work by freezing natural objects in water. The artwork looked stunning hung around the school. The children also enjoyed making an igloo from recycled milk bottles!

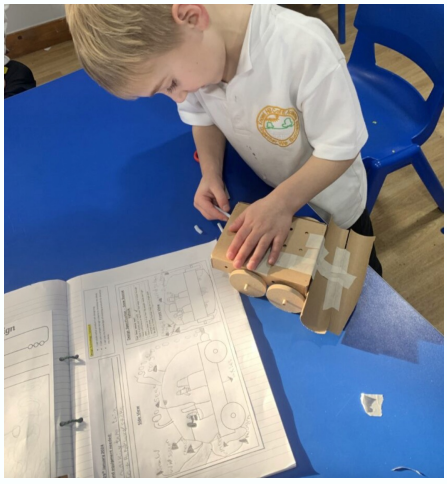


In geography, the children worked hard to label maps of the arctic circle. They enjoyed researching where different animals such as polar bears, seals and arctic wolves and adding these to their maps. They found out about the climate in the Arctic circle and about all the ways it is used by people.





For D&T, the children explored Arctic snow vehicles. They learnt how to wheels and axels work and then set to work finding out the best shape for a snow plough. We were amazed by the children's teamwork, designing and making skills.



For art, the children learnt that animal masks were an important part of Inuit culture. They make some observational drawings of Arctic animals before learning how to create a mask using clay. They learnt about different mays to manipulate the clay to make the different shapes needed. They then learnt how to score the clay and attach parts together using a slip. The children were all very proud of their finished masks.

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For history this term, the children have been discovering what life was like for Inuits in the past and comparing with what life is like for them today. They have discovered that Inuits maintain many of their traditions but that as they have connected with countries outside of the Arctic circle, this has introduced technologies such as snow vehicles, motor boats and synthetic clothing which has changed their way of life.

For science, the children have been learning about habitats. They have explored micro-habitats around the school and have been amazed by the abundance of insects they found living there. The children have also focussed on the Arctic habitat and learnt how animals, such as polar bears, have adapted to survive there.

The learning from both of these subjects was greatly enhanced by our visit to Oxford's Pitt River and Natural History museums where the workshop and artefacts really bought these topics to life!



Here are some comments that the children made about the visit:

'We got to hold a catapult that they used to catch fish. They had to hunt because they couldn't buy food in shops'

' The weapon they used to catch Whales was called a harpoon, it was very sharp so we couldn't tough that one'

'The coats were made from Caribou fur, we felt it and it was very thick and warm'

'The Inuit used to tell stories by making pictures because they couldn't write, they drew the pictures on seal skin'

'These days, some people are still living in the Arctic but you need special permission to hunt there now'







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Years 3 & 4



This Spring term, year 3 and 4 have been studying the Africa. In geography, the compared the various biomes of the continent in relation to the equator and the tropics of Capricorn and cancer. They also located places where the population density was highest and least and reasons for this. For history, the children learn about the Kingdom of Benin. They learnt about the features of Benin including the Oba (monarch). They learnt how the kingdom grew to be an important trading nation because of the craft skills of it's people. The children loved visiting the British Museum to see the Benin Bronzes in the flesh. They were just as impressed by the stunning museum! The workshop 'People of Benin' helped the children to learn and understand more about the Benin Kingdom.

Here are some comments the children made about the visit:

'It was nice to see the real Benin Bronzes because we have been learning about them,, I think they looked impressive'

' I think that the Oba was a fair ruler because he treated everybody the same if you were a servant, farmer or soldier.'

'We learnt that mothers weren't allowed to to involved if their son was to become Oba and usually they were killed. There was one that became so important that she was allowed to live but she wasn't allowed to live in the palace.'

'I saw a mask of an Oba with a leopard. It had a powerful animal to show that he was the king.'

'I learnt that about the Oba and how important it was to Benin (now Nigeria). The Oba wore a coral hat and shows were made of mudfish.'







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For art this term, The children learnt about African masks. The found out about the different ways that masks have been used in African culture and explored the shapes and patterns that make up the face.
The children learnt how to roll clay evenly and to the right thickness. They then learnt how to use tools to accurately and cut the shapes needed to make their masks.
The children experimented by making their own ‘slips’ to attached the parts of their masks together. They were delighted by their finished masks!





For music, the children learnt about the main features and instruments found in traditional African music. They explored the techniques of ‘call and response’, by first using drums and percussion instruments, then voices. The children also developed their ensemble skills by rehearsing and performing a rhythmic pattern, which uses the call and response technique.

For Design & Technology this term, The children were challenged to design an African wagon. The wagon was designed to meet the specification that it must move across at least 2 different surfaces, use an electric motor to move and hold at least 1kg and still travel.



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In science, years 3 + 4 studies the topic ‘Animals including Humans’. They have learnt all about the skeletal and digestive systems. They completed lots of investigations, including modelling the digestive system with with tights, rolling pins and other household items. They learnt about the different types of teeth and why different animals have different teeth depending upon their diets. We were lucky enough to borrow ‘Charlie’, a horse skill owned by Waltham Place farm for the children took up close and sketch the different teeth. The children also learn about good oral hygiene, and used disclosure tablets to explore plaque before and after brushing teeth,









For R.E. The children learnt about Islam. The children visited Maidenhead Mosque to find out more about their Question: What do Muslims believe about God and where did Islam start?

The children learnt a lot from seeing the Mosque themselves and hearing about what makes it such a special place for Muslims.

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Years 5 & 6

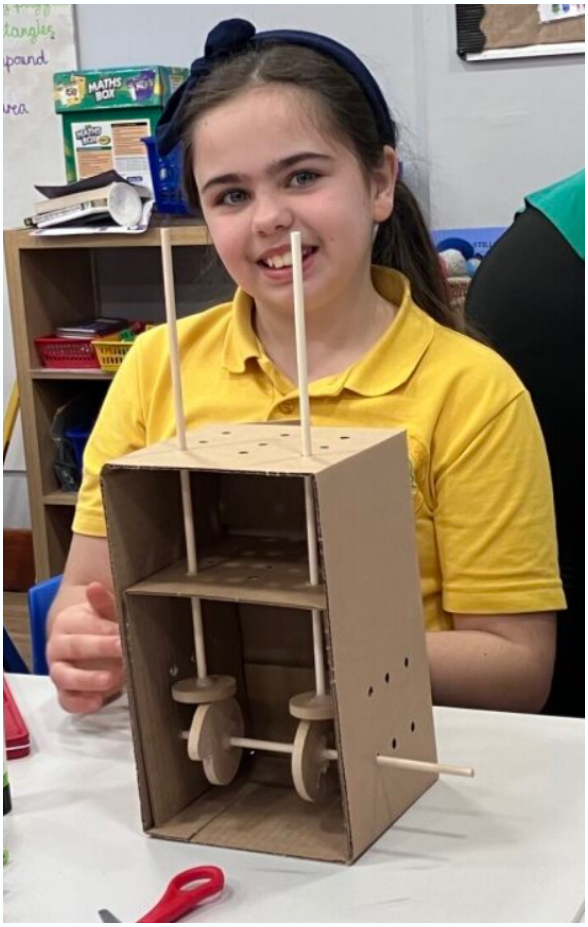
Year 5 and 6's topic 'Shackleton's Journey' stated with endurance training. The children completed a variety of 'training exercises' to help them to understand the challenges of a life exploring Antarctica!

In geography, year 5 & 6 then learnt about the continent of Antarctica. They learnt about the reasons why there are only two seasons in the polar reasons.

The children compared Antarctica and the Arctic circle, learning about the reasons for differences in climate, vegetation, landscape, wildlife and land use.

For Design and Technology, the children explored CAM mechanisms. They learnt about the different shaped CAMS and the movements that can be created. Year 5 & 6 then designed and made their own Antarctic themed CAM toy.

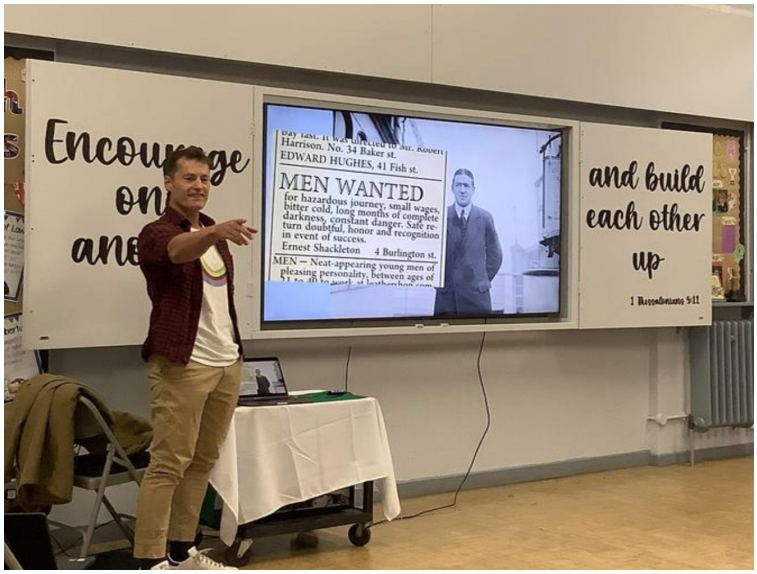




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Years 5 & 6

For history, years 5 & learnt about the famous explorer, Earnest Shackleton. They learnt about his expedition and the challenges he faced.
This topic was enriched by a workshop from Scott Polar Research Institute. We were also extremely fortunate enough to be visited by Grant Brokensha who was a member of the crew on a recent expedition to find Shackleton's sunken ship!! He spoke to the children about his own expedition and the importance of finding the long-lost endurance.



For art, the children explored making a three-dimensional wolf sculpture using clay. They built an armature as a base to build their sculptures around. The children used a wide range of clay work techniques such as hollowing, coiling, joining and pressing to create the finished look! We think the finished clay pieces are fantastic!







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In Science this term, years 5 & 6 completed the topic ‘Earth and Space’. They learnt about the different celestial bodies in the solar system and their relationship to one another.

Between 1969 and 1972, six manned Apollo missions successfully landed on the Moon, allowing the Astronauts to collect samples and bring them back to Earth for study. 382 kilograms of lunar material was returned, most of which was used for scientific research.

Some of these samples have been preserved in acrylic disks for educational use by NASA.

We were very fortunate enough to receive a loan of Lunar rock samples from the STFC who lends these precious samples to educational institutions, allowing our children to engage with a true piece of space history!

The children were also visited by our good friend Arthur White, member of Maidenhead Astronomical society who delivered an interesting presentation on star gazing!

‘We got to actually hold rocks that came from the moon!’



‘We tested some of the rocks and meteorites and found that some were magnetic because they contained Iron’



Encourage one another and build each other up
1 Thessalonians 5:11

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STEM Week



This term, we also celebrated STEM week. During this week, the children took part in a range of activities to develop their skills in Design and Technology, and Computing.
For computing, EYFS explored their brand new 'Coding Critters'. These floor robots allowed the children to explore inputting commands and sequences to instruct their critter to follow a maze.







EYFS also explored creating rockets! After watching Wallace And Gromit's Cracking Contraptions where the pair design a rocket to take them to the moon, they then explored making different 'rockets' using recycled containers to explore which was the best at launching their paper mouse into space.



'We used a bottle and we needed to bang it. The rocket went really high!'

'When you squidged the bottle more it went higher.'

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STEM Week

Year 1 & 2 learnt about the art of stop-motion animation. They then created their own animation storyboards and use stop-motion to film their own sequence.

After watching Wallace and Gromit's cracking contraption, where Wallace struggles to fall asleep. The children designed and made a sleep mobile.

The mobile had to be designed so that it was equally weighted and would balance. The children chose between a stick, balance or cascade design.





'It was tricky to make because of the string and tying all the knots.'

'I made a cascade with a really big green triangle at the bottom. First, we made the shapes, then we made the spiral and attached it all.'

"I made a stick mobile. I hung shapes by typing string and placing it where we wanted it to go. We had to make it equal. We had to use the same paper and cut the shapes the same size so it would balance"

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STEM Week

Years 3 & 4 were inspired by Wallace and Gromit's cracking contraption 'The Soccomatic', years 3 + 4 designed and made a 'football scoring' contraption using a motor and fan.



Years 3 & 4 had an incredible opportunity to explore product design kits loaned to the school by Dyson.

LKS2 learn about James Dyson and his determination to improve upon existing products.

They looked closely at Dyson's fan design and could test it out for themselves!

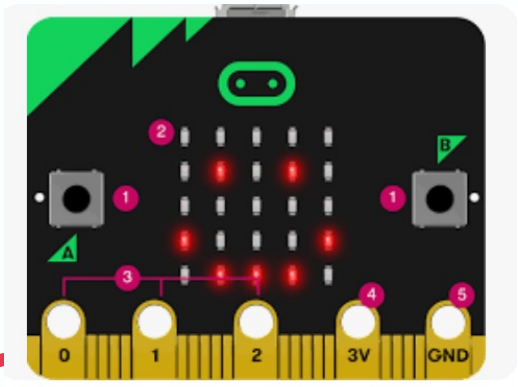


'We had to make the fan spin. The easy bit was making the circuit and hard bit was putting it all together.'

'The bladeless fan is safer because you can't get your fingers trapped in it.'

During STEM week, years 3 & 4 were introduced to the school's new Micro: bit resources. They learnt how to programme the micro: bit to create a simple animation of a butterfly flapping it's wings! They are looking forward to exploring further projects with these fantastic new resources!





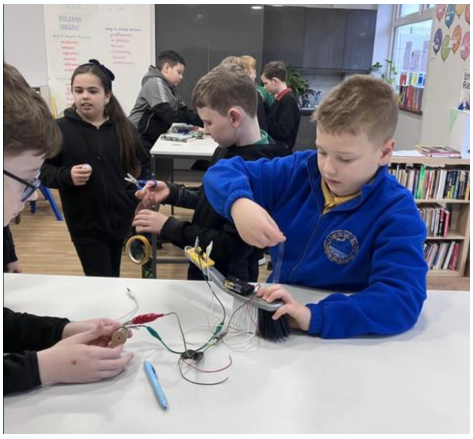
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STEM Week



Years 5 & 6 explored the Dyson vacuum cleaner product box as part of their project inspired by Wallace and Gromit's 'Crackervac' The children were able to test and evaluate the Dyson vacuum product in terms of appearance, design and functionality.

They were also able to disassemble two different Dyson vacuum cleaner heads to see how the product has been improved upon! They were amazed to discover that the anti hair-wrap designed was inspired by the Ancient Egyptian 'Archimedes' screw.



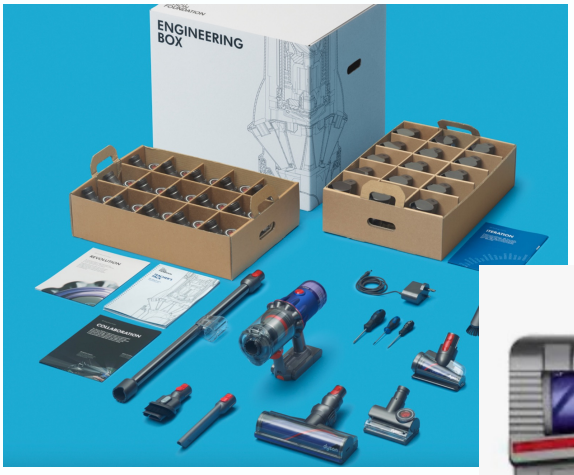
Year 5 & 6 then took this inspiration to design and make their own 'brush monsters' as an alternative for Wallace t clean his house with!

'Engineers need to think outside the box to keep making things better and better and better.'

'I liked being able to dismantle the pieces of the vacuum head and work together to memorise what we had done.'

'I liked the engineering because we got to see how different the first prototype vacuum was and how it changed.'







Encourage one another and build each other up
1 Thessalonians 5:11





Years 5 & 6 also had the opportunity to explore the school's new Micro: bits. They were able to design and programme a more complex sequence of a dancing man!

Here are some comments the children made about the STEM week:

'A micro: bit is a tiny computer, it's got a compass, a USB charger, a microphone and once you plug it into a laptop you can do coding on it, we coded animations'

'I learnt to make pictures without having to draw them by coding them on the micro: bit'

'I liked exploring the make code website to see the different codes you can create'

'Stop motion is where you take lots of photos of an object, which you move a little bit each time. You put them together to make a movie'

'Remembering to move the characters just a little bit each time was challenging, but after a practice go we got better at this'

'It was hard to hold the camera still. You have to make sure that you don't have your arm in when you take the picture. I learnt to put one hand behind my back so that it wasn't in the picture.'

'I learnt that I had to be very careful moving the animals that they didn't fall or the movie wouldn't be smooth.'