

Aspire

Educational Trust

MAT Newsletter November 2017

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We have had a very successful start to the academic year. We have 2 new schools joining the trust soon, Puss Bank Primary School in Macclesfield and Wilbraham Primary School, Manchester. Both of these schools will bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the Trust and we look forward to working closely with them in the future.

We are also organising another joint residential. In total, we have 281 children from the 8 schools going on a trip to Paris, which we are all very excited about.

If you would like to find out more information about the Trust please do get in touch - ceo@aet.cheshire.sch.uk or telephone 01625 383075.

Kevin Simpson

A big welcome from me too, to Puss Bank School & Nursery who will be joining us on 1st December and Wilbraham School who plan to join early next year.

We have, of course, already started working with both these schools to support the transition to academy and although there is a lot of work involved in establishing the new regime and working relationships we are certain it will be worth the effort and bring rewards for all concerned going forwards.

Like the teaching and learning staff, the office staff at all AET academies endeavour to work together and support each other to ensure we all provide the best service we can for the pupils and staff of The Aspire Educational Trust. Your hard work is very much appreciated ladies!

Kath Stanier
MATBOM



News from our Academies:

Aspire Educational Trust - First Joint Educational Visit to Normandy



In May 2017, we embarked on our first Trust-wide international trip to Chateau Beaumont in Normandy. The chateau is nestled in beautiful, tranquil French countryside on the borders of Normandy and the Loire, and it sits on the crest of a hill surrounded by 10 acres of grounds. Ten members of staff accompanied forty-five (Year 5 & Year 6) children from Ash Grove, Sandbach and Underwood West Academies on the five-day excursion. The experience gave every pupil the opportunity to undertake new challenges, practise their French language as well as explore the rich history and culture of France. And along the way, many new friendships (staff and pupils alike) were formed.

Chateau Beaumont was selected due to its proximity to a wide range of historical and cultural sights. The children took part in a number of excursions including to Fougères, home to a magnificent medieval fortress steeped in history. The St Hilaire market was also a big hit. The market provided a typically French atmosphere with a variety of stalls selling locally produced food and goods. The children were given the opportunity to sample some of the local delights as well as practice some French. The final day was spent at Le Mont Saint Michel, its very walls and cobbled streets ooze atmosphere and are said to be the inspiration for JK Rowling's Diagon Alley in the Harry Potter books and films.



Back at the chateau, the children were given plenty of opportunities to socialize and work in teams and undertake new and exciting challenges. One of which was the zip wire activity. The thrill and sense of personal achievement was a powerful memory especially for those who conquered fears of heights (staff included!). The Nightline activity enabled the children to overcome challenges and obstacles whilst blindfolded. They were required to work as a team to navigate their way across an obstacle course. This was a superb opportunity for bonding and teamwork skills as well as for many laughs along the way. The children were entertained from morning until bedtime with a packed itinerary culminating in evening entertainment (a disco, French night, quizzes) arranged by the chateau staff.



The trip was a resounding success and has laid the foundations for future Trust-wide international adventures. More photos can be seen from the dedicated twitter account for the trip @aspirenormandy



News from Puss Bank School & Nursery

Puss Bank Year 6 at Dovedale Residential Centre – October 2017

Once again the children of Year 6 followed the path to the beautiful hamlet of Dovedale for their annual residential trip. This year we followed our usual plans, but with a few twists.

We began with our long walk upon our arrival. As usual, after a short stop for ice creams, we crossed over some stepping stones (across the stream which runs through the valley) and headed off. Once we had had lunch al fresco style, we veered off onto a different walk this year. It took us through the beautiful countryside of Ilam, where Mr Loxham could tell the children the story of St Bertram, who is associated with the village.

That evening we were again busy, this time with a talent show (which included some cheeky impressions of the teachers!) We once more ventured out on a "midnight walk". Having frightened the children with a ghost story, we set off to retire to bed – fortunately the children realised that the story was fake and so they could relax for the night.



Day 2 came and Peak Pursuits arrived to perform a round robin of events: team building, archery and a 6 metre climbing wall. All the children took part and really enjoyed the day, especially the climbing wall, which was the first time we had done it at Dovedale. We were outside in some glorious weather from 9 am until 5 pm – the great outdoors can be such fun! That night after a disco (!) and a lovely film show, hot chocolate and biscuits were served and we were off to bed. Not one peep was heard all night!

Day 3 was a little disrupted by blue algae, which was sadly discovered at Astbury Mere, and so we couldn't raft build that day. However, bush craft was arranged as an alternative and we all had fun taking part in this anyway.

By the time we arrived back at school we all stank of smoke, were incredibly tired and we all needed a shower and bed!

We did have a fabulous time though...

News from Sandbach Primary Academy



At Sandbach Primary Academy, the well-being and safety of our community is of upmost importance and we strive to develop the community's awareness of these areas, to develop them not only as learners but as individuals with skills to guide them throughout their lives in and out of education. As part of this mission, we have just taken part in a very exciting and interesting trip and have begun a brand new project to improve the well-being of all.

Safety Central -Helping you and those you care for stay safe, keep healthy and be happy.



On Monday 25th September, Year 5 and 6 visited Safety Central, which is a purpose built, interactive life skills education centre (situated at Lymm, near Warrington). This centre is run by the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and is a visit not to be missed! We were one of the first schools to visit as it only opened in September 2017.

The centre is a 'truly immersive learning environment' where an indoor village has been created and people of all ages can develop the skills and knowledge they need to stay safe and well at home, on the road and in the community.

Throughout the day, the children took part in ten different workshops including: road safety, rail track safety, first aid, bullying, well-being and fire safety. This is to name just a few workshops that this centre has to offer – there are many more to choose from. The majority of the workshops take place in the purpose built village which has a road, train station, farm, construction site, canal, electricity sub-station and a house so that all scenarios are realistic, interactive and engaging. The authenticity of this village really does have to be seen to be believed – it is an absolutely fantastic resource!





Not only is the centre amazing but the staff that work there are too. Their knowledge of the different scenarios and their key messages were clear and easy for the children to understand and at all times the well-being of the children was paramount. All of our communications were acknowledged, clearly communicated to the staff and considered, to ensure that the children got the very best from this experience.

It is safe to say that all children and staff who took part in this trip had a fantastic time. The children have stated that they now feel more confident in a range of situations and have learned things that could potentially save their lives and the lives of others. Visiting Safety Central really is an opportunity not to be missed and it is FREE! For more information visit: <http://www.safetycentral.org.uk/>

Further plans...

As we progress through the year, we will be continuing our work on safety and well-being.

Already we have worked with the NSPCC, to learn how to keep ourselves safe in different scenarios and the NSPCC have also worked with our parents to deliver some key E-Safety messages. Our work on E-Safety is planned to continue with some collaborative work being run within Cheshire East.

In addition to this, we will also be beginning a project linked to well-being, where we aim to develop our understanding of this and the five key areas to achieving it. This will not only be targeted at the children but also at their families and staff. This project is being based upon elements of the Cheshire East Emotionally Healthy Schools work that is being rolled out across the Local Authority.



News from The Wilmslow Academy



This year our whole school charity event was chosen by the school council. On Friday 6th October all the children in school recognised and contributed in celebrating women in the Armed Forces for Red, White and Blue Day 2017. The children and staff came dressed in red, white and blue to raise money for the three national charities: ABF, The Soldiers' Charity, The Royal Navy and Royal Marines charity and the RAF Benevolent Fund.



The day began with an outstanding family assembly from Mr Baguley in Class 13. The children re-enacted elements of various wars from the Crimean through to World War 2. They explained the dedication of the armed forces and the importance of supporting service people and their families.

After assembly, the children were invited to contribute to the £1 coin trail to use up old 'round pounds' and compete to see which house could make the longest trail.

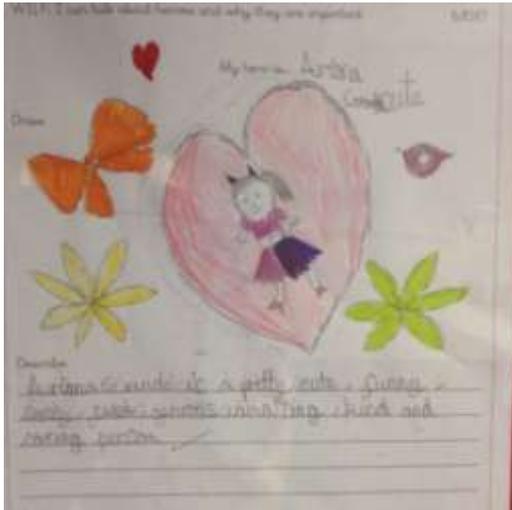


Throughout the day, the children continued to work and celebrate the Armed Forces during lessons: Year 2 created their own British Postage stamps.

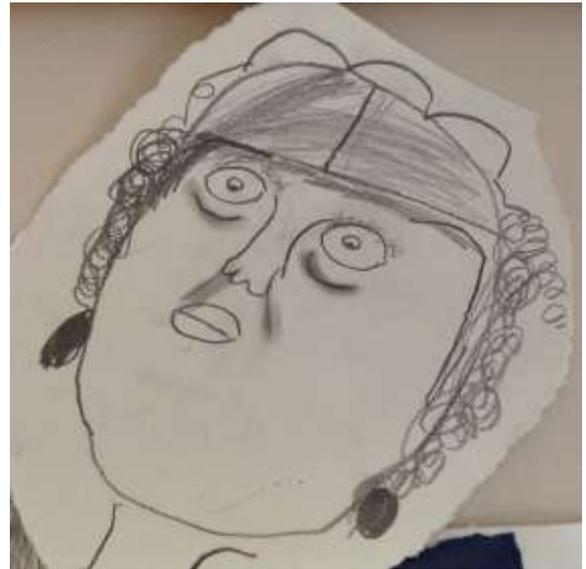
Year 3 re-wrote diary accounts taken from Florence Nightingale's own diary during the Crimean War.

Class 13 based their art work around the heroes that died on the battlefield ...

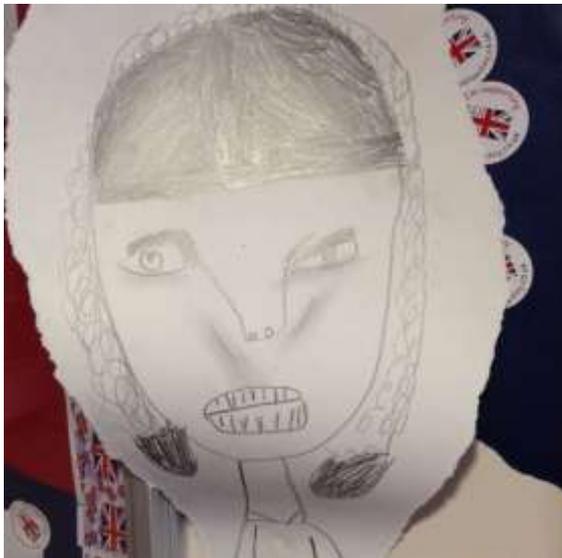




...whilst others were inspired to write about their own heroes.



Lots of talented children used drawing pencils to sketch a portrait of Florence Nightingale.



The Blue House won the charity trophy with the longest pound trail and all together the school raised a tremendous £293.03 for Red, White and Blue Day!

News from Victoria Road Primary School



Stewart Garden Schools Programme 2017 winner announced



Well done to Victoria Road Primary School which has been announced as the winner of the Stewart Garden Schools Programme for 2017. They scooped the top prize of £1,000 to spend at their local garden centre, beating off stiff competition from Southbourne Infant School in Hampshire, Bernard Gilpin Primary School, Tyne & Wear, and Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Oxfordshire. All three runners-up collected £100 to spend at their local garden centre.

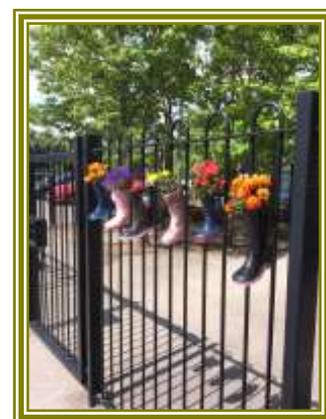


Aimed at young students between the ages of six and 11, the competition encourages kids to get creative with products that are exclusive to Stewart Garden. The pupils of Victoria Road took top honours after impressing judges with their inventive use of the Stewart Garden kit. They transformed a small growing area into a garden that any adult enthusiast would be proud of. Armed with their kit, which included flower pots, watering cans, an unheated propagator, a scoop, seed trays and an informative booklet, the

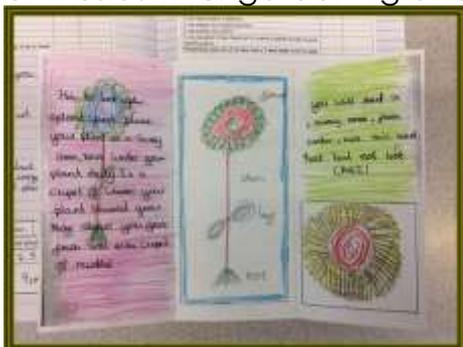
winning school displayed talent that belied their young years.

Judge Val Bourne, a well-known garden writer, said: "The school's entry showed a wonderful amount of child participation and enthusiasm for gardening and growing. I loved the use of old wellies which were planted up with flower seeds. They made very vivid and fabulous planters - I know what to do with my old wellies now!"

"The class made bottle gardens and hung them on the school fence. The headteacher said that they were like little jewels."



The Stewart Garden School Programme was established in 2012 and Victoria Road are the sixth winners. Last year's winners impressed judges with their science experiments, their enthusiasm for gardening and their community spirit. Victoria Road had a different



approach but, crucially, their enthusiasm for gardening was just as impressive to the judges. Andy Burns, managing director at Stewart Garden, was hugely impressed by their work saying "The school's work was excellent. It's great to see how young people maximise our products and witness their passion for gardening and growing vegetables. The judges were impressed that Victoria Road Primary School integrated the programme into its curriculum."

Karen Roberts, teaching assistant at Victoria Road Primary School, was understandably elated. She said: "Our students have so much passion for gardening and the whole school is ecstatic to have won this year's Stewart Garden Schools Programme."

An appeal on behalf of Victoria Road Primary School:

Also on the subject of gardening at Victoria Road Primary School, their original plastic greenhouse was ripped in the wind so instead of buying a new one, their fantastic and talented Site Manager, Alan Riding, is in the process of constructing an original Recycled Plastic Bottle Greenhouse. The school have been collecting used plastic bottles to build it and will need about 1000 to get it finished – so, calling all drinkers of soft drinks from **2 litre plastic bottles** let's all help Alan and the Victoria Road Primary School complete this fabulous project by saving our bottles and passing them on to the academy.

You can either drop any bottles you have off at Victoria Road Primary School, or at your local AET academy which, we're sure, will be happy to pass them on.



News from the Research School and Aspirer Teaching Alliance:



The Aspirer Research School is going from strength to strength. The team (Megan Dixon, Charlotte Clowes and Mark Avis) are working widely across the region and with a number of Local Authorities. We have run a wide number of courses already this year and the new CPD offer is nearly ready (all free for schools within the Trust).

In January 2018, we will be starting the popular 'Leading TAs for Maximum Impact' programme, a new 4 day course exploring the EEF Guidance for Improving Maths in KS2 and a 4 half-day course on robustly evaluating the impact of teaching. A 5 day course for teachers, built around the KS1 Improving Literacy Guidance is on the way, too.



The popular Research2Teaching Seminars will be starting soon, with Dr Angela Webb coming to share her expertise around handwriting. These free seminars run from 4-5pm at Ash Grove Academy and are a great opportunity for all practitioners to listen to experts share their knowledge and answer questions. Details can be found by following this link:

<http://www.aspirerresearchschool.co.uk/page/?title=Research2Teaching+Seminars&pid=31>

As usual, we will be ensuring they record a podcast to be uploaded onto the Aspirer Research School website and the Aspirer Teaching School Research2Teaching pages.

Of course, you can find out about everything that is going on and more by signing up to the regular monthly newsletter at <https://aspirer.researchschool.org.uk/sign-up/>

This is the link for the most recent Autumn term edition <http://createsend.com/t/d-D26800D638C7A16B>

M Dixon.