

# Owl Post

March 2023

## Welcome



### Dear Families

Whilst this term has been relatively short, it has seen the children achieve so much in such a short space of time. During our recent parents' evenings, I am sure you will have seen this reflected in the children's outcomes in their books. A particularly impressive part of this learning journey is the way in which the children are responding to their learning questions and the 'big' questions in their topics. This is a very important part of our curriculum, as it allows the children to see the value in asking some very tricky questions and to value the way in which we can all answer these in slightly different ways. The children's books are a credit to the impressive body of knowledge they are acquiring and the ways in which they can show how this knowledge connects across different subjects. Whenever Miss Marchi and myself work with other leaders and Governors to explore this, we are always so very impressed by the knowledge the children share

and we always learn something new ourselves!

This term, our curriculum has been further enriched through activities including the use of Art sketch books with Mrs Buchanan, some wonderful and inspirational trips and visits, some fantastic visitors to the classrooms, our 'Great Debate' and, of course, more Year Group plays and productions giving all children an opportunity to shine. We are looking forward to seeing more of this next term and sharing some exciting projects with you over the coming terms, including a project to develop and improve playtime provision.

All of these opportunities are carefully and ambitiously planned for, as well as being delivered by, our wonderful staff team. They never cease to amaze me with their ambition and drive to offer the children the very best. As Miss Spivey and Miss Stanton begin a very exciting next step in their lives

and begin their maternity leave, we continue to expand our teaching team and welcome Mr Rogers and Mrs Newton as teachers in our school. Additionally Mrs Singh and Miss Field joined our staff team this term and have added such value to our very talented support staff team. Our staff have worked together to achieve great things this term including our Rights Respecting Bronze Award and proudly worked with families to achieve our re-accreditation in the Leading Parent Partnership Award. An award we couldn't achieve without the input from our families.

A busy term indeed; one with much to celebrate and one in which all deserve a good break and a rest!

Enjoy the coming break and the celebrations that are upcoming for many during this break and of course, the precious time together.

**Gemma Norman, Headteacher**

## LPPA and Rights Respecting School Award

This term, the school achieved two very important awards: Rights Respecting Bronze and Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA). The Rights Respecting award is a very important award for our children as it recognises the commitment we have to the United Nations Rights of the Child and the ways in which we develop the children's awareness of these rights in school. Our 'Great Debate' captured this understanding beautifully and we are looking forward to our application for Rights Respecting Silver award shortly.

Additionally this term, the school was successful in its re-accreditation for the LPPA. This accreditation represents a 12 month focus on gathering parent feedback and improving our practice in the best ways we practically can. This has included revising the Homework Policy, developing a Communications Policy and refining the extra-curricular booking system. This award represents the school's commitment to working with its community as part of an ongoing process of school development.



Thank you to all who completed surveys, attended working groups and those who attended the assessment on the day. A particular thank you to Mrs Clair and Mrs Coleman for their co-ordination of the process towards these awards.

## Nursery



### How do Things Change?

Nursery have been very busy exploring our learning question 'How do things change?'



We have been very busy learning all about the weather and exploring how it has changed from the Autumn to Spring Term. We enjoyed lots of welly walks and the children amazed us when they created rainbows out of sticks in the mud!

We also looked at how we can make things change. It was so much fun exploring how we can make things melt. To help explore this further, the children went into the forest area and melted chocolate onto marshmallows! We had lots of chocolate covered faces! We then looked at cooking different things and we made cupcakes and pizza. It was all very yummy!

During our Science lessons, we have looked closely at how plants grow.



We now have our very own plants growing in Nursery! These include flowers, carrots, radishes, spinach and strawberries. To ensure we look after our plants, we have a gardener of the day who waters and takes care of our plants. They are growing well and we are looking forward to seeing them grow more in the Summer Term!

## Reception

### What Came First?

We have loved watching the children blossom as the Spring Term has progressed and we considered our new overarching question 'What came first?'

We reflected upon our favourite memories to help us understand the concept of past and present. We used this knowledge to travel back in time, learning about explorers from the past, including Neil Armstrong and Mary Anning. When a nest of dinosaur eggs arrived in our classrooms, we learnt about the significance of Mary Anning and her famous discovery of dinosaur fossils. The children amazed us with



their knowledge and passion for historical figures and events, their enthusiasm was fantastic to see!

As the seasons changed, the children enjoyed a second visit to Gatley Carrs and noticed the signs of Spring around them. We found out about different Spring plants as part of our Science learning, naming the basic structures and investigating what helps them to grow. Demonstrating their impressive artistic skills, the children combined



their knowledge of Spring plants with their understanding of colour mixing to develop some wonderful drawings and paintings of flowers in their sketch books, inspired by Vincent Van Gogh. Linking this to our knowledge of the past, we were able to discuss how things in our environment change over time.

We look forward to spending the Summer term watching the children develop further in their skills and understanding.





## Year 1

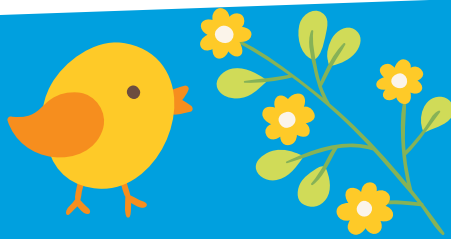
### How do we Grow?

**We have had another exciting term, answering our overarching topic question 'How do we grow?'**

We began this term by investigating what humans need to survive and how these needs can apply to animals as well. We then looked at different animal habitats and how their habitats can help to meet their needs. In Science, we have explored plants and asked whether all plants are the same. The children even planted their own sunflower seeds - we hope they are growing well at home!

Next, we answered the question "How does nature evolve?" We looked at the dangers of plastic pollution on the seas and animals, as well as coastal erosion. We created some beautiful sculptures using nature in the style of artist Andy Goldsworthy and also enjoyed some amazing Forest School sessions in our outdoor learning provision.

The real highlight of our Spring term has been the production, where the children showcased their brilliant knowledge of what makes Britain great as well as their geographical knowledge of the United Kingdom. They wrote their own lines and really showed that they could remember all of their learning. We think you will agree it was amazing!



## Year 2

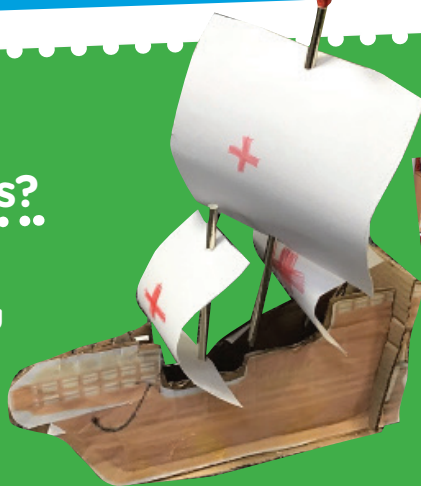
### Are we Life-long Explorers?

**This Spring term, Year 2 have been exploring the question 'Are we life-long explorers?'**

We enjoyed our exciting trip to Manchester Airport Visitor Park, where we were able to become pilots on the DC-10 aircraft and visit The Concorde. We have also loved learning about the intrepid explorer Christopher Columbus, and how he travelled west to discover the Americas. Using our Design and Technology skills, we used different cardboard joins to create our very own Santa Maria ship, paying close attention to detail.

More recently, in Science, we have learnt about David Attenborough and the positive changes he makes

to our planet and the environment. We immersed ourselves into our Computing lessons, using Scratch and coding to program a sprite to move across the backdrop. In Music, we have enjoyed using our vocal skills and percussion instruments to gain an understanding of rhythm, tempo and pitch. We are very much looking forward to our Summer term topic and in particular, our production!



## Forest School

**This term we have had great fun in the forest with Year 1 and Nursery, making connections to our classroom learning.**

We have been exploring, 'What do we need to survive?' with Year 1.

Nursery have been considering 'What can we melt?', 'What can we cook?' and 'What can we grow?'



## Year 3

### What Lies in the Rainforest?

Year 3 have been answering the question 'What Lies in the Rainforest?'

We have enjoyed investigating life in the rainforest through Science, where we studied plants and animals. We learnt about different types of skeletons, including hydrostatic skeletons, endoskeletons and exoskeletons. Our artistic talents came to life when we painted beautiful watercolour paintings of the rainforest, inspired by Henri Rousseau. We have also learnt about the importance of protecting the rainforest and now understand the impacts of deforestation.

We have also recognised the importance of valuing the world and the wonders it holds through music, where we worked with Mr Butt to practise our vocal performance to sing at the Bridgewater Hall alongside the Halle Youth Orchestra.

Recently, we have used our Forest School provision to conduct Geography fieldwork to explore the differences between deciduous forests near us, and tropical rainforests far away. In History, we have explored the term 'civilisation' through our studies of the Mayan Civilisation. We have gained fantastic knowledge about their way of life, and how the rainforest provided resources for them, including chocolate!



## Governors

**The governing body have had the opportunity to be in school a lot this term - whether observing Music and Art lessons, or supporting the school's LPPA accreditation. It's always a joy to talk to the children about the work that they're doing and the progress they're making, so it was an absolute privilege for us to be part of the panel for 'The Great Debate'.**

I cannot overemphasise how proud parents and carers should be of the children. Seven different councils, made up of children from all year groups, each picked an article from the United Nations Rights of the Child charter and put forward their case as to why it was the most important. They presented their case on stage in front of classes from across the school, plus a 'Dragon's Den' style panel made up of representatives from the Trust.

From the hard work put into the research and presentation, to the children's support of each other on stage - it was such a rewarding experience for all involved. I think I can speak for the whole panel when I say that we would have happily given every council first prize if we could!

**Lisa Dennis**  
Chair of Governors



## Year 4

### Who Were the Ancient Egyptians?

In Spring term, Year 4 have been asking the question 'Who were the Ancient Egyptians?'



It has been such a fascinating journey back in time, and we have been able to connect all areas of the curriculum together through our learning. Alongside the ongoing historic backdrop, we explored the River Nile in Geography, witnessing alluvial deposition first-hand and discussing how it helped Ancient Egypt to thrive. We created our own tomb paintings in Art, analysing original paintings and mimicking the style in our own outcomes.

As part of our Science sub-question 'What's happening inside my body?', we particularly enjoyed (or endured!) a messy experiment illustrating how digestion works... including the end product!

A highlight of the term has to be showcasing our sticky knowledge in our year group production at Elm Road. To prepare for this, we wrote scripts that included stage directions in English sessions and learnt songs to sing, along with a live accompaniment, in Music. Perhaps most excitingly, we threw ourselves into a practical exploration of sewing to create costumes in our DT cycle - thank-you especially to Mrs McMurdock for her support with modelling and using a sewing machine!

To wrap off our term, we enjoyed welcoming Groundbreakers to teach us more about what we can find in the Bible through the fun retelling 'Diary of a Disciple', and will compare this to the stories of the Qu'ran in our Social Understanding lessons.

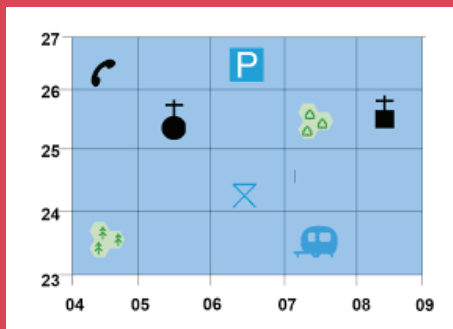




# Why is Ancient Greece Still Relevant Today?

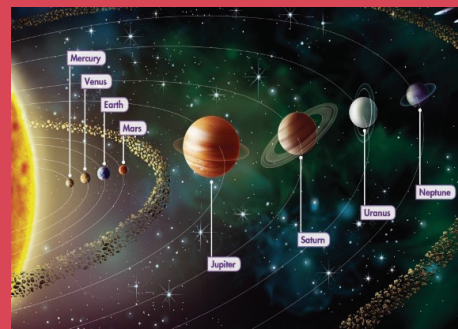
In Spring term, Year 5 have been asking the question 'Why is Ancient Greece still relevant today?'

We have studied many subjects and considered how our lives are different to those of people in Ancient Greece. As well as looking at how the Olympic Games has evolved, we also considered the legacy this wonderful event has had on social co-operation between different countries and civilisations. In Geography, we studied grid references and learned how to read a 4-figure and a 6-figure grid reference. As well as expanding our locational knowledge, we also studied the physical geography of Greece and developed our understanding of mountains, peninsulas and archipelagos. We discussed why farming and lines of communication were so difficult, and



how the physical geography of Ancient Greece contributed to it being made up of hundreds of city-states.

Alongside History and Geography, we have broadened our understanding of the Solar System and learned how night and day occur, as well as the heliocentric and geocentric theories and what these theories consisted of. We have learned the order of the planets closest to the sun and considered constellations and



how their positions helped people to navigate.

Across the curriculum, we have studied Music, Art, DT, French, and Computing and enjoyed reading our class text 'Who Let the Gods Out? With the extra enjoyment of swimming each Monday, which has been a huge success, it really has been a busy term!



# What Makes Manchester Unique?

Year 6 have had a fantastic Spring term exploring the question 'What makes Manchester Unique?'

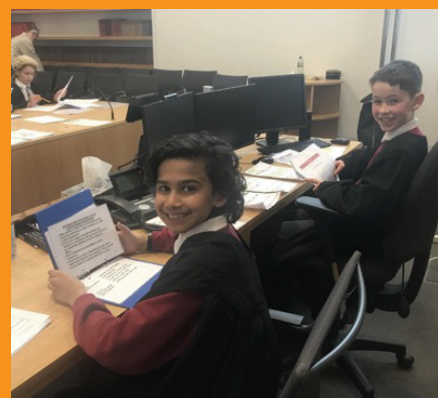
Our learning has taken us on a journey through Manchester's rich history of democracy, from the Peterloo Massacre to the rise of the Suffragette movement, even to the present day workings of the Justice Centre, which we were fortunate enough to visit on our school trip. We met several judges and barristers and asked them various questions about their roles in court, before taking part in our very own mock trial.

In Geography, we have explored the evolution of land use in the UK, before taking a closer look at how Manchester's land use has changed over time as a result of rising population



numbers and a change in the wants and needs of the people that live there, such as the increasing demand for international travel. We discovered that Manchester's location at the heart of the M60 and its established travel networks means that it is an accessible city for everyone to visit.

Throughout the topic, we have also been inspired by several significant figures such as Alan Turing, Emmeline Pankhurst and even L.S Lowry, and have examined the impact that they have made on Manchester as a city. In our study of Art and Culture, we were fortunate enough to be visited



by Stanley Chow, a local artist, who shared his artistic journey to creating his 'Great Northerners' with us. Inspired by his visit, we created our own replica in his style, before comparing this to the work of other local artists Simone Ridyard and L.S Lowry. Within this unit, Mrs Coleman and Mrs Lyall took us back to the 1990s with a comparative study of Oasis and Take That - we're not sure who enjoyed it more!

We're very much looking forward to our Summer term topic where we will explore the question, 'How does a Civilisation Grow?'