

## Creating Cultural Capital – Netherton Moss Primary School

Economic and social disadvantage is widely recognised as being one of the greatest barriers to educational achievement and future life chances. Here at *Netherton Moss* we are relentless in the way that we use every aspect of school life to enable the children, whatever their background, to access and build up their reserves of both Social and Cultural Capital as well as the full range of knowledge skills and dispositions that are essential if they are to understand, communicate and be successful in the world.

In order to do this, we as a school must be inspirational in all that we do each and every year. Key to this is way in which we create and maintain the on-going momentum that is necessary for the sustainability of our work. It is through the design of our school curriculum, its content and delivery that we achieve this important goal. Our intentions as a school are articulated through the key curriculum drivers that we follow, as they set the direction for all of our work and enshrine the commitments that we make to our school community. These drivers are:

### *Communication, Community, Resilience, Creativity, Adventure, Health*

With these drivers in place, informed by the strong partnership that exists between the whole school community, we provide the space, resources, expertise and opportunities to make these intentions a reality and one that can inspire every participant in the process, children and adults alike.

Our work exists in two distinct and interconnected spheres. Firstly, at the class level there are a wide range of learning opportunities designed to enhance the children's social, cultural and educational experiences, all of which are age appropriate, complement the need to communicate effectively through the basic skills of literacy and numeracy but also take full account of the individual needs of the children.

In order to provide a flavour of the depth and richness of that work and to illustrate the way in which our curriculum drivers are embodied in the opportunities we provide, we have selected just one of the highlights from each Year Group this year.

Firstly there are the experiences of Marigold Class (Nursery) whose celebration of Pancake Day made links to many other aspects of their work, making full use of our school grounds, Moss Munch and a wide range of quality texts. The children used environmentally friendly dough to create 'pancake faces'. In class they were reading *The Runaway Pancake* and they discovered that the pancake came to life! The children instantly made links with the gingerbread man which we studied earlier in the year. They spent the afternoon in our woodland area finding woodland objects to add to their dough to create their faces. This activity provided a great opportunity to develop vocabulary based on their environment/natural world, discuss seasonal changes and to hold conversations about how important it is to show care and concern for living things and the environment. They were very proud of their creations! They then of course had to make and decorate their own pancakes.



Next there are the experiences of the children in Daisy Class (Reception) as they have explored the joys of our Forest School this year, work that draws together every element of our six curriculum drivers. The great outdoors on their doorstep is, come rain or shine, the location for much of their daily learning. It is nearly 20 years since the school had the vision to plant its own forest; it is a huge joy to see our youngest children exploiting every learning opportunity available in this wild and unspoilt environment. It is also an indication of our strong sense of community and history, that the parents of so many of the children, who are reaping the rewards of this beautiful natural resource today, were the children who planted the trees all those years ago!



In each year group, certain aspects of the curriculum are left open so that some of the content can be negotiated with the children and reflect their views and ideas. At the start of the year, the children in Poppy Class (Year 1) expressed an overwhelming interest in animals of every kind and this has characterised so much of their work and when topics stem from such a personal interest, the children cannot help but engage with the learning that takes place. In order to maximise the cultural capital the children gain from their love of animals and to support and inform their learning the children enjoyed both a visit to the zoo and another visit from the zoo when the animals came to spend a day in school with the children, for much of the time free to roam the classroom!



Participation in the Arts and Music has always played a vital role in our school curriculum, no more so than in Sunflower Class (Year 2). Here the children have on-going access to a wide range of musical instruments as well as weekly, hands-on music lessons. Staff training has helped to develop the opportunities within these sessions enhanced by visits from professional musicians and participation in the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra concert programme.



The Resilience of our children is another of our drivers and in Clover Class (Year 3) this has been a real focus this year. In amongst the creative and engaging curriculum, the children have been focussing upon themselves and developing their skills under the Belonging, Learning, Coping and Core Self aspects of our school Resilience Framework. Circle Time, class discussions, daily mindfulness and self soothing activities are helping to develop the critical skills and dispositions that can help the children to manage their emotions and sustain a positive sense of self and meaningful and supportive relationships with others. In addition to this, our new curriculum innovation of Sensory Circuits is enabling children with specific needs to work with their peers in a range of physical activities that engage their senses most readily, resulting in a much more fruitful engagement with the rest of their learning.



When there is a match between curriculum content and the interests of the children as well as the skills and knowledge of the teacher's staff, then a real synergy is created. The work of the children in Jazz Class (Year 4) this year has taken on a real historical bent. Their studies and interests in the classroom have taken much further afield during their learning. As Rotten Romans, a visit to the ancient City of Deva (Chester) saw them join a garrison of the mighty Roman Army for the day and with shield in hand they stalked the walls of the city. Jumping forward in time and with costumes in hand, they brought the Tudor portraits of the Walker Art Gallery to life for the visiting public. Their crowning glory however was their dramatic retelling of the whole of Tudor history in just 6 minutes. They not only wrote the script themselves but performed this to a packed school assembly as well as producing their own documentary podcast. Who needs a written test when you can share your new found knowledge with the whole school community and beyond?



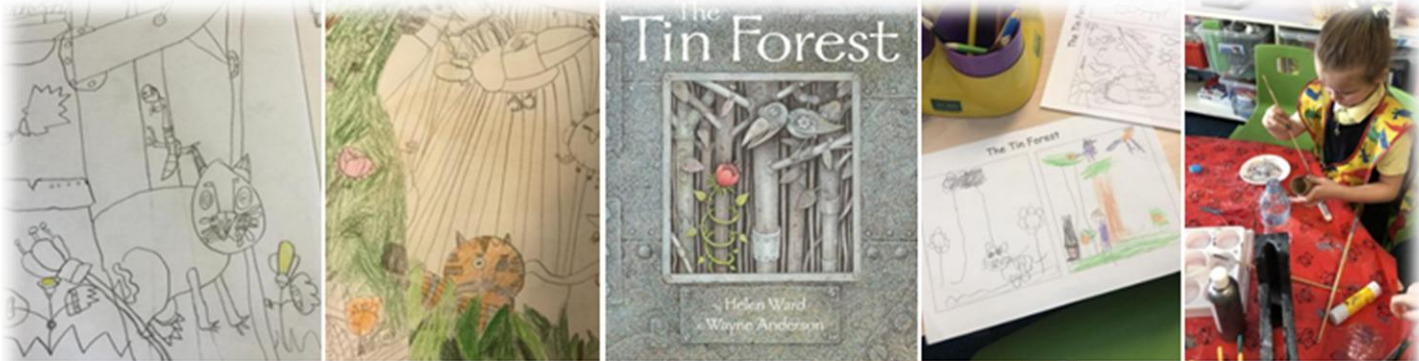


The second sphere of our work is closely interlinked to that of the first. Beyond the individual age related work, we constantly seek to create opportunities for the whole school to collaborate in projects that transcend age and ability and unify the school community in a common goal and shared purpose. Some of the Highlights of 2018/19 include:

Our annual, multi award winning, whole school Arts performance was this year entitled *Ponpunoto!*. Written, composed and envisaged entirely by the children themselves the production not only reflected their interests but also reflected the schools aims. The children take on every role within the production, acting, production, publicity, stage management and many more. Ownership and participation are the key characteristics of every arts performance, everyone must be involved, no question and in that lies its most inspiring quality.



Another creative success this year has been our Tin Forest Project. Based around the remarkably pertinent story of a man who creates a world of great beauty from the waste that is thrown away by everyone else, the children were inspired by the amazing picture book by Helen Ward and Wayne Anderson. We worked as whole school to use our DT and Art skills to transform a wide range of waste products into our own Tin Forest, combine our literacy skills to recycle the basis of the story into many other new and beautiful tales. For the most part the children worked across the ages combining both their skills and their finished artwork into a series of whole school displays and texts. In a final creative twist the older children choreographed their own dance based on the story which they performed at our local dance festival before returning to teach it to the younger children.



In terms of adventure, we started the year with the installation of our very own orienteering course, taking in the contrasting range of habitats contained within the school grounds. As a school we have made a commitment that all children should have regular access to adventure and our new course, designed for children of all ages, is just part of this. Another important element is that all the children have access to residential outdoor and adventurous activity. Through our close partnership with Crosby Hall Educational Trust (CHET) every year group from Year 2 onwards has the opportunity for a night or two away from home each year and our on-going commitment ensures that by the time they leave us, everyone, regardless of means or circumstance has had that experience of adventure.



Learning to play a musical instrument is another important source of cultural capital to which we are committed as a school. Each week all the children have access to a rich and varied music curriculum. Staff training is important to this along with the deployment of peripatetic specialists. From Year 3 onwards every child learns to play a musical instrument, percussion, recorders, keyboards, brass and clarinets. This Year every child in KS1 and KS2 has attended the schools concert with the Liverpool Philharmonic orchestra, experiencing world class live music on their doorstep, provides the children's own music making, with such important impetus and inspiration. Our musical talents are celebrated with the wider school community each summer at the Netherton Moss Summer Music Concert where of course everyone from every year group gets to perform.



Food is another focal point for the whole school, and just as the kitchen is the heart on the home, then 'Moss Munch', our school kitchen is at the heart of the school. The skills needed in order to cook and feed oneself in healthy and sustainable ways are the ultimate survival tool for adult life. Whether we are feeding ourselves or feeding the community, cooking is an activity in which the children so readily engage. Through the physical, social and cultural activity of the preparing and sharing of food the children learn so much about themselves, each other and the world. Like so much of our work, cooking is for all, not just the older children. The culinary event that perhaps encapsulates our work best comes in the form of the annual 'Cookathon'. A full day in which every child in school cooks and contributes to a dish that they can then take home with them at the end of the day. The older children are trained in the preceding weeks and given all the skills that they will need to help, support and demonstrate for the younger children. This year's Cottage Pie' was a huge success, all 200 portions of it!!



Right next to 'Moss Munch' is the school allotment where the school grows its own fruit, vegetables and herbs, it is great to watch the children as they pick the ingredients they have nurtured and put them straight into the dishes they will enjoy. In many cases the global environmental issue of 'Food Miles' is reduced to just a few 'Food Metres'!



Our long-term and on-going commitment to physical health is promoted throughout the year with the provision of high quality PE and adventurous activities as well our participation at all levels in the Daily Mile programme. A visit from the Team GB decathlete Matt Lee who led a series of circuit training events was one of the highlights of the year. The grand finale to all this activity comes in the form of our annual Sports Week. For this year's event the children were placed in teams, each representing a different nation. The teams were mixed age, from Reception to Year 6, enabling our older children to take care and value the contribution of the younger ones and promote the school expectation of being a good role model. Appropriately coloured T-shirts and caps were provided for each child and this allowed all participants to feel

they truly belonged. The whole school community was invited to the various opening and closing ceremonies, as well as many of the events during the course of the week. As part of the preparations, each team was given time to write their own pledges describing their own personal goals for the week. Throughout the week the children participated in a range of physical activities all of which enabled them to win points for their country. It was our aim to provide all the children with the opportunity to shine in the physical activities they experienced as part of our Sports Curriculum but also to provide our own legacy by working in partnership with different community providers to enable the children to experience a wide range of new and previously untried sporting activities.



With the challenges of a school in which 62% of the children receive Pupil Premium Funding and 35% have SEND, our highly skilled and experienced team are relentless in delivering inspirational, life enhancing and inclusive learning for all our children. Supported by the whole school community, it is our fervent wish as a school, to provide the children in our care with an on-going and sustainable programme of exciting, engaging and inspiring opportunities. We want these to be rooted within the culture and ethos of our school, not simply one off events that come and go and are never seen again, but opportunities that take root and repeat and deliver a rich legacy that helps the children to accumulate over their time with us, deep reserves of social, cultural and intellectual capital that will enable them to make their own happy, healthy and successful way in the world.