

Hope Tree School....

Skype's News

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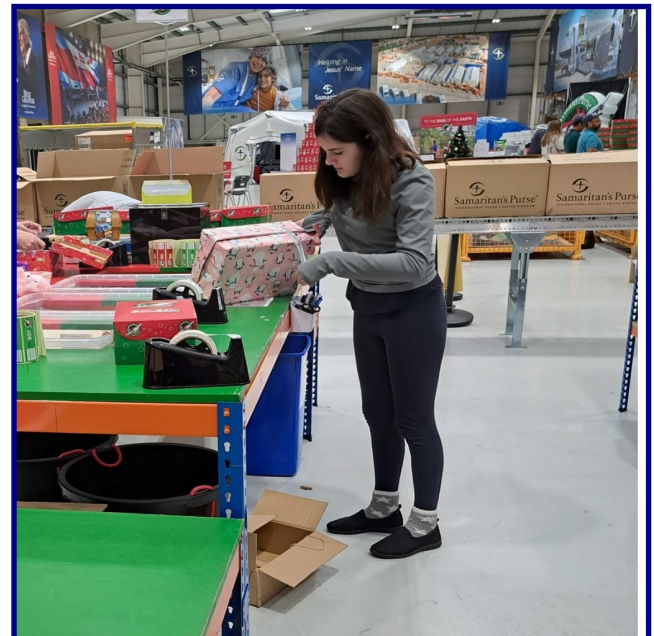
Even tiny schools can do amazing things.



Following on from the amazing success of the summer where students raised over £500 for charity, our students set about their next charitable task. This time students participated in the Samaritans Shoe Box Appeal to support Operation Christmas where boxes containing essential and enjoyable items are sent across the world. Students donated items they no longer used at school, brought in things from home and also used their reward gems to purchase additional items to be placed within the shoe boxes. Our 22 students successfully made over 40 shoe boxes! Each box was carefully checked and wrapped by the students to ensure that as many children as possible would benefit.

Congratulations to Ocelots class who played a central role in the coordination of this event alongside a special mention to one of our students who also visited the main packing centre in Coventry where she successfully participated in more packing activities and having a good look at what happens once boxes have arrived.

Hope Tree School is so much more than just a place to sit at a desk and receive knowledge. Visiting new places, trying new things and developing life skills are a central part of our ethos. We constantly look for ways to enhance our students lives, build confidence and enable them to develop into well rounded young people who know the importance of balance in their lives.



Classroom learning in West Barn (Years 8 and 9)

English

Students across the classes have looked at poems from Shakespeare to Benjamin Zephaniah alongside the use of poetic techniques, the importance of imagery and use of comparative language. In the second half term focus turned to important literary texts including A Christmas Carol and The Crucible. Embedded in these lessons are opportunities to develop understanding of social class and poverty, use of analysis and inference skills and relationships between characters.

Maths

In Maths this term our year 8 students have been looking at ratio and scale, multiplicative change, multiplying and dividing fractions, working in the Cartesian plan, representing data, tables and probability. Over in the year 9 class, students have worked on Pythagoras, 3D shapes and prisms, linear equations and their graphs and testing conjectures and congruency.

Science

Topic areas for this term have included the human body, cells and micro-organisms alongside concepts of evolution and inheritance. Students have been using our microscopes to look at cells alongside investigating factors affecting respiration in yeast. In year 9 students have been looking at specialised cells e.g. neurons and the brain. They have also planned and carried out scientific experiments, collecting data and looking at ways to represent this. Students have also been learning about the environmental impact of humans on plants and animals.

D&T

In D&T students have had an introduction to electronics using soldering irons to create a functional LED circuit in a shape of their choice. This has involved many stages with troubleshooting and testing resilience being key skills embedded within this project. Students learning to design and shape plastic sheets, use associated tools, make holes using a drill ready for LED's and then attaching the circuit together.

Geography

In Geography students have been learning about glaciations and development, looking at the ice ages, glacier formation and movement. Other topics include natural resources and river management where students considered different rock and soil types alongside the factors which influence flooding in the local area.

History

Year 8 have looked at the Norman Conquest, the various aspects of living under Norman rule and the Feudal system. This was followed by looking at medieval life, the black death and the impact on population data. Year 8 enjoyed dressing up in historical costumes and then acting out the various events they were learning about. Over in year 9 focused on the two world wars and the time in between them. Looking at the treaty of Versailles and other important historical events during this time.

Art

Year 8 students started the term by engaging with 'The Blood Bag Project' - a craft project that aims to raise awareness of the rare blood condition Diamond Blackfan Anaemia. The project offered the opportunity for the students to explore a range of materials to create a very varied response to the theme, crafting their own 'blood bags' full of love and hope - among other things! The second half of the term saw the group exploring the world of TV and theatre sets, designing and making their own prototypes or constructing maquettes of their own scenes from favourite shows, including props and cast.

Willow and Ferrets spent the first half term responding to the theme of mythical creatures. Inspired by the work of J.R.R Tolkien, the students were encouraged to experiment with pen and wash to represent mythical creatures of their own choice or invention while continuing to develop their creative journals. After half term we looked at the role of book illustrators. Having evaluated the work of a range of artists, including Lauren Child, Eric Carl and Satoshi Kitamura, the students were offered the opportunity to respond to an illustration brief and create a 'dummy' book. It was pleasing to see how the students took inspiration from well known names and rose to the challenge of using collage and mixed media in their own work.

RE and PHSE

All students looked at Judaism in the first half term before moving on to explore the similarities and differences between and Abrahamic religions.

In PHSE this term the main focus has been on aspirations and setting goals.

Classroom learning in Nursery House (Years 5, 6 and 7)

Flamingos and Zebras have participated in many practical activities in our topic sessions this term. They have sewn Tudor pouched to make a Tudor dress before a trip to Kentwell Hall. The students made and tasted Pottage and learned about life in various classes during Tudor times. They explored facts about King Henry IIV and his wives, the travels of Sir Francis Drake and the Spanish Armada.

In the second half term the focus was on the solar system and space. Students enjoyed designing and producing space mobiles and spaceships alongside finding out about the Space Race and the first landings on the moon, creating fact files and posters about the space race

Nursery House have also been looking at poetry in their English lessons and enjoyed their Emotional Menagerie Topic where they worked on using ambitious vocabulary. Some students have been looking at Macbeth and beginning to understand some of the vocabulary and content used by 19th century Authors.

In Maths, the students completed a lot of work on fractions, converting, adding and subtracting equivalent fractions. We also worked on telling the time, 24 hours clocks and use of analogue clocks. Finally the students completed problems using long multiplication and division.

In Art, students examined the work of well known artists, before experimenting with a range of media. The students went on to invent their own islands and used mark making and typography to create detailed maps of their new worlds. After the half term break they developed their drawing skills before turning their sketches into 3D pets. By Christmas, the class had two dogs, a penguin, a raven and a cat! Upstairs in Nursery House students started the school year by exploring a range of both 2 and 3D materials to draw, design and construct sculptural birds and their nests. The results of their work included a wonderfully varied range of creatures - including a bird called Bob and a very sassy 'Blinguin'! After half term the students were introduced to printmaking. Starting with found objects (and hands) then moving onto making their own printing blocks from plasticine and press print the students explored new techniques and vocabulary.

Learning outside the classroom

Houses of Parliament:



A big trip for our students. The Houses of Parliament, which included train and tube travel alongside being able to watch debates in both the House of Commons and House of Lords. Amazing resilience shown by all.

PE:

Students across the school have participated in a number of PE activities this term. This has included whole school tennis, visits to Milton Country Park where students have been able to learn skills whilst Geotagging, Archery and Axe throwing. In the second half term, whole school swimming took place in St Ives along with ice skating. It is amazing to see the skill development in those students who were with us last year and have made really good progress year on year. Next term we will be looking forward to our annual trip to the Trampoline park and Badminton and, hopefully, the introduction to Pilates for some of our students.

Frameless



Off to London again for our year 9 students who went to see the immersive art exhibition Frameless. Art is an important part of our provision and enabling our students to attend these trips allows them to connect what they do at school with wider society.

Kentwell Hall



Our younger students supplemented their learning with a trip to Kentwell Hall where they could experience life as it was in the Tudor times. Opportunities to dress up, alongside hands on activities ensured a good day out for all.

Local trips

In addition to our trips further afield, students also went to a local theatre to see Cinderella, the pantomime. All students had the chance to go to the cinema and used their democratic skills as each class decided which movie they were going to watch. Some students have been into Central Cambridge to buy books for school and others went to Hobbycraft to purchase craft items and our budding performing arts students in year 8 scoured the charity shops to find items to use in their next performance—a busy term.



Queenholme Farm

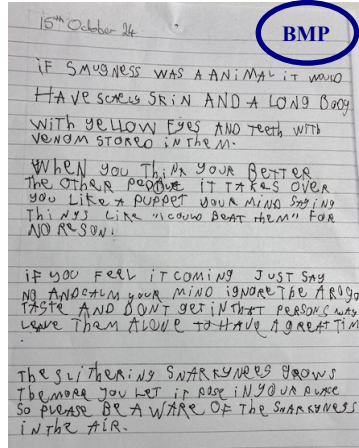
Following the decision by the farm to no longer offer sessions to school groups we have now had our last visits to the farm. Going up to the farm on a weekly basis has been an essential part of our provision since opening the school in June 2022.

Katy Gilbert gave us the opportunity to spend time at the farm along with the herd of Alpacas who often have a dramatic and positive impact on many of our students. Learning to be still alongside them, learning to interact in a way that works for all alongside the abundance of confidence building in animal handling that all our students have had access to cannot be measured.....We will miss you all!!!

We will be eternally grateful to Katy and the herd for all those experiences and memories. Whilst the farm and Alpaca herd will no longer be available to us, we will be on the lookout for more opportunities for our students to spend time in nature and be alongside animals..... Watch this space for more news when it arrives.



Autumn term creativity



A word about Ofsted

Our second full inspection came and went. Staff, students and parents were all outstanding throughout—even Skye didn't alert bark at them. We ticked a few more boxes this time around and those that we didn't... well, using a mainstream framework to make a judgement about a specialist school seems a bit daft really, however we do have things to work on, improve.... All aimed at the best interests of our school community Onwards and upwards.....

And Finally



A very Merry Christmas in 2024 and we will look forward to seeing everyone again in 2025.