

# Primary Hub Exemplar Case Study - Geography

If you want to find out how effective any curriculum area is, there is one group of people who are guaranteed to give you a good dose of the truth: the pupils. We did this back in 2021 with our Geography Curriculum, and it is fair to say that the answers they delivered a rather thought-provoking response. Some examples below:

**What is Geography?** “It’s where you take pictures of things from the past”, “You do good work and keep it up”, “Stuff to do with maps,” and interestingly, “I don’t think I go to Geography lessons, do I?”

**Where is Mexico?** "It's up in the sky", "I've been to Mexico in a hotel and pool and it's in the sky!"

**Can you name some physical and human features of the seaside? “No”, “No”, “No – it’s the first topic we did this year”.**

Once we removed our head from our hands, we began the process of working out why our curriculum was so ineffective. Teachers worked hard to plan lessons, and we knew we were covering the National Curriculum; however, there was a profound disconnect between our intentions and the impact this was having on pupils. Pupils told us that learning was not meaningful and therefore not memorable, and we were determined for that to change. Despite pupils in Year 2 learning about Mexico for a half-term, some pupils were still convinced that it resided in the sky. Their lived experience of going on a plane ‘into the sky’ to visit on holiday, trumped anything they could learn in the classroom. We knew that we needed to make our curriculum relevant and based in real, lived experience, and this is where our PTI day really came in and we were lucky enough to be able to attend the event with Dr. Paula Owens in November 2022.

Whilst we did do other things to improve our curriculum immediately (such as making Geography a discrete subject rather than a part of a topic-based approach and use of the Geographical Association and Oddizzi) we settled on two main targets what we took from our PTI day: **fieldwork and mapping**.

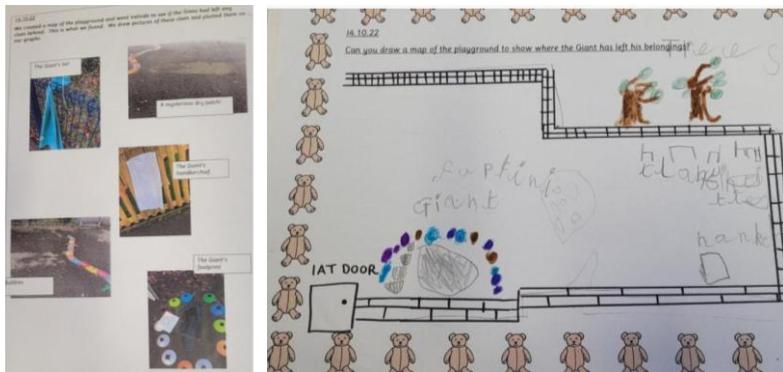
## Fieldwork

We know from our PTI day with Paula, that fieldwork can really bring Geography to life for pupils. At the time, we had sporadic examples of fieldwork with little or no progression to them. Paula discussed creating an audit of the local area, where we already visit and the purpose of these trips. From this, we were able to begin the process of mapping Fieldwork across the school. In addition to this, we introduced 'Fieldwork Week' where pupils drop everything and get into the field! More About this later.

Paula suggested starting with our school grounds – something we are incredibly fortunate with. We use our school grounds for all pupils, but Paula's talk has had benefits for our youngest children. Paula also suggested how toys and figures could be used to engage and motivate pupils to see real value in Geography!

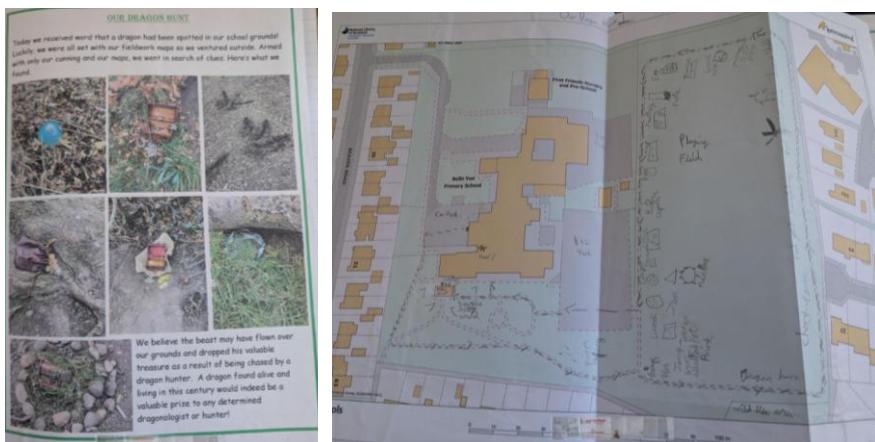


As an example, the pictures above show our Reception pupils learning about mapping our school grounds using the story Chicken-Licken. Our Year 1 children get a regular visitor to their classroom: a friendly Giant. The giant then leaves with their class teddy. Children must then use their geographical skills to bring the teddy home.

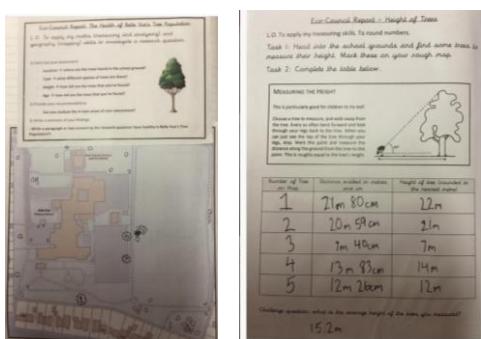


In subsequent conversations with pupils, later in the year our Reception and Year 1 pupils were able to recall these lessons, explaining their how they used the physical and human features of our playground to achieve a goal. And most importantly, they loved and remembered the experience.

Pupils in Year 3 always appear to get a visit from a Dragon! There is always much excitement as they map the clues that the mythical visitor has left in our school grounds.



We have been able to use our grounds in many other ways, often inspired by out PTI day across the year groups. The scope of this is too much to share in this report but to give another example, our Year 6 pupils investigated the health of our tree population. This even involved estimating tree heights!



## Out of School and Further Afield

After our PTI day, we wanted to map our pupils' 'Journey around the World'. Whilst we would love to take our pupils to far flung corners of the globe, we know that this is not realistic. Therefore, decided to a) utilise our local area better b) use trips we already do to give a geographical element and c) use the fantastic 'Virtual Fieldwork' units on Oddezzi, allowing pupils to explore areas of the world that we are sadly unable to visit in primary school!

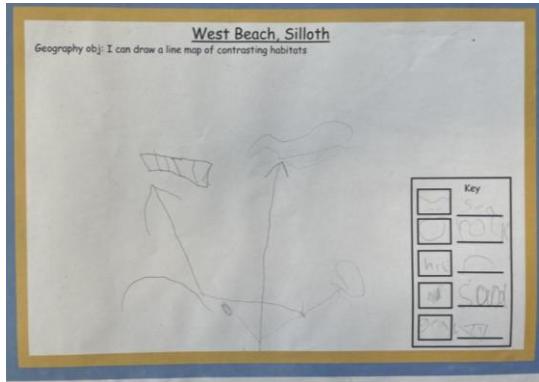


It is hard to distil a day's learning into one soundbite, but if we were to define our biggest 'takeaway' from the PTI course, it was that so much geographical enquiry can be done in a short amount of time. It does not have to be endless logs and data: it can also be qualitative. This is an area we had previously ignored and one which may have contributed to our pupils' lack of connection with the subject.

Whilst we do still value the quantitative approach to fieldwork, we have also added in many opportunities to give their personal responses to different environments. Again, this starts with our youngest pupils taking part in sound walks in our grounds. As Paula suggested, pupils get the chance to draw maps on our playground and jump into them – describing what they see/ hear/ touch and how it makes them feel.

As an example, our Year 2 pupils now visit our local beach as a part of our 'Seaside' topic. At the forefront of our planning for this trip, was a quote shared on our PTI day: A child's perception of place is tied to activity (Tuan, 1977).

Therefore, as well as a more conventional geographical activities such as mapping and analysing beach debris, we now build in time for pupils to freely explore the environment and play. We take pupils to an ice cream shop, and we take them to paddle in the sea.

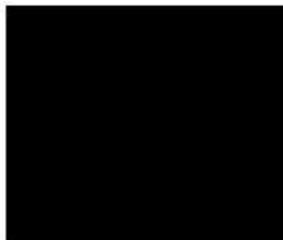


Whilst it is possible to look at why the seaside is important to people in a classroom environment, we know that experiencing the joy of paddling, rolling down sand dunes (whilst also conducting other forms of geographical enquiry) gives pupils a much more meaningful, memorable and accurate understanding of the landscape and its significance to people. Now when we ask pupils questions about the seaside, they almost always reference their trip to the beach with some linking this trip to their own subsequent trips to the seaside. Pupils overwhelmingly talk about the ice cream, but if you delve a little deeper, they all remember the geographical activities they did and how it made them feel.

In Year 5, pupils study 'Mountains'. As part of this, they have the opportunity to walk up a fell in the Lake District. Again, we focus on pupils using OS Maps and compasses, navigating up the paths, but have now added in a qualitative element. They are encouraged to collect 'wonders' as they walk (where appropriate) which they can collate back in the classroom – this is an activity we did on our PTI day in Penrith. They spend time at the top of the mountain simply looking at the view and we talk about how it made them feel. They then give their 'empathetic response' considering why others value this place so highly. They also consider the impact that its popularity has on the local community – speaking to people who live there. All ideas taken from Paula.



## Our Current Fieldwork Map



Year 1: Study of our local Area—what we like and what could be improved



*Our field trip around our local area*

*We planned a route around the local area. We talked about things we liked that people and things we could improve. We went to the shop that has closed down, and discussed what we would like to put in the shop!*

Year 2: Seaside Study and Engine Lanning



Year 3: Roman Carlisle and Local Study



Year 4: The River Eden, Carlisle Archives and York



Year 5: Latrigg Fell and our City Centre



Year 6: London, Victorian Carlisle

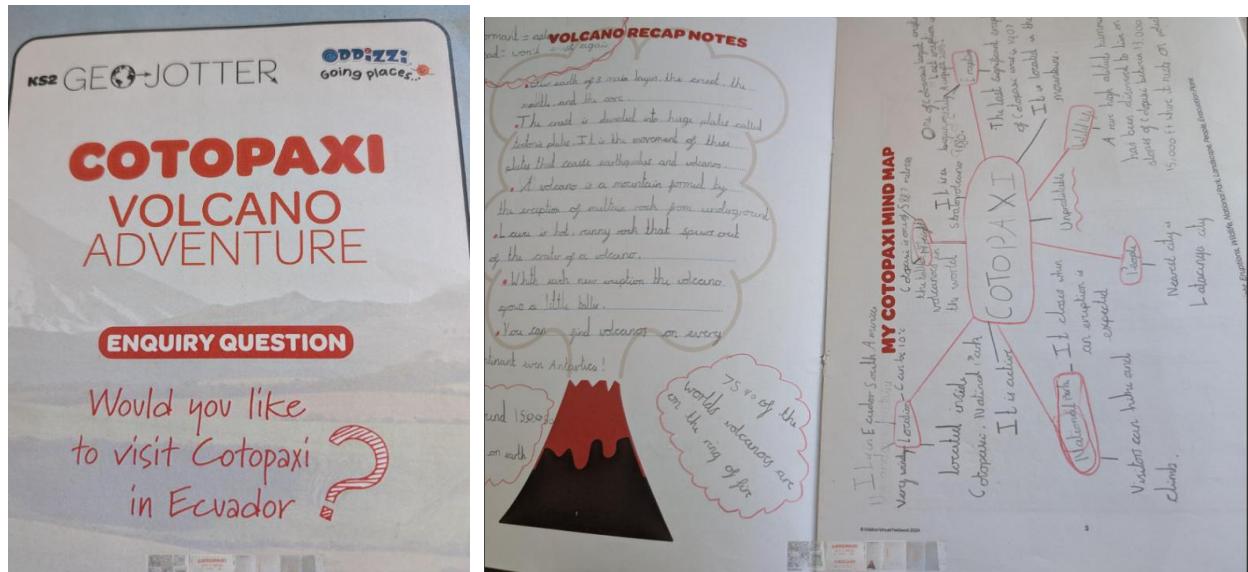


## Going beyond our PTI Day

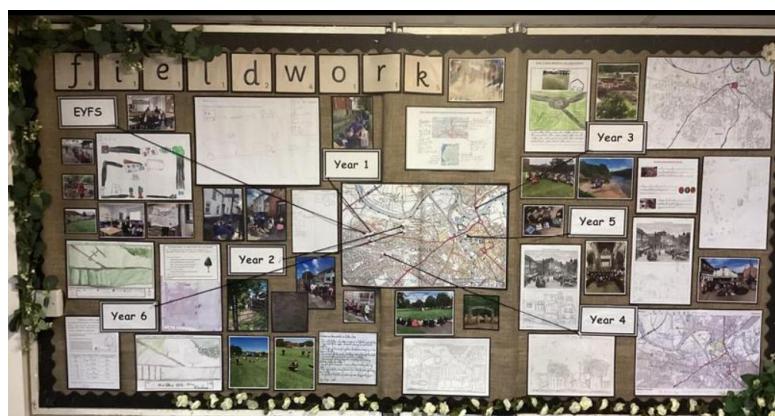
Our PTI day with Paula was truly inspirational. We took on board the key messages, replicated many of the ideas and plans in our school and it has been transformational for us. However, over a year down the line, we are now at the stage that we are building upon this learning and trying new things to further improve our curriculum.

### Virtual Fieldwork

Whilst getting into the field is hugely important, we want pupils to be equally passionate about areas of our planet which we unfortunately can't make our school budget stretch to visiting. This is where Oddizzi's virtual fieldwork comes in. Using Videos, virtual tours and Geo Jotters, pupils get a real sense of what it would be like to be there.



### Fieldwork Week – Where in the World is our school?



As curriculum leaders, we were naturally bothered by pupil voice stating, 'I don't think I do Geography lessons.' Our aim is for every pupil to feel like a geographer. With this in mind, we set aside a whole week where all pupils get out of the classroom and engage in fieldwork. We know already from pupil voice, that our children now look forward to this week every year!

## Mapping

I think one of the biggest learning curves in our Geography journey so far has been the concept of what is a map? For most of us, (teachers included) a map was a large piece of paper with a key and features. If we were very daring, a digital version of the same.

On our PTI day with Paula, she blew this idea out of the water, leading us to completely re-write our progression of mapping skills!

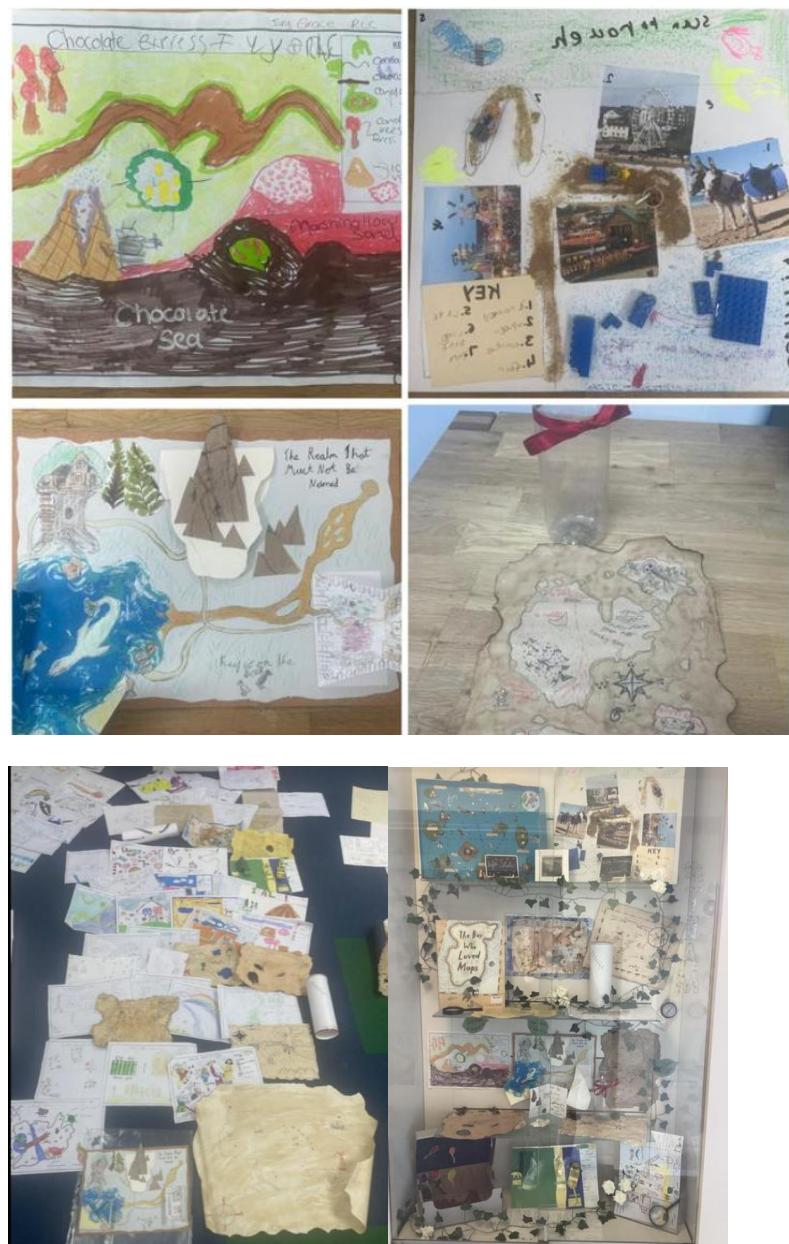
Drawing Maps	Make messy maps and large scale maps from memory, based on real and imaginary places.	Draw picture maps of imaginary places and from stories.	Draw a map of a short route experienced, with features in correct order, complete with key.	Make a map of a short route experienced, with features in correct order, complete with key.	Begin to draw a variety of thematic maps based on their own data.
Representation	- Look at signs and symbols on different types of maps (e.g. map in school, and the local community)	- Use own symbols on imaginary map to begin to understand the need for a key.	- Use class agreed symbols to make a simple key	- Know why a key is needed and how to use it.	- Draw a sketch map using symbols and a legend.
Using Maps	- Use a simple map to move around a space or retell a story.	- Follow a route on a map to move around the school	- Use an OS map to explore their local area.	- Follow a route on a map.	- Follow a route on a map.

Within a month of our training, we had worked with staff on messy mapping, sheet mapping, line mapping, sketch mapping and thematic mapping. This had an instant and profound impact.



Teachers tell us that this simple change has increased the amount of map work that is being done, because it makes mapping easier and more accessible to all; it has increased pupil engagement with mapping and has ultimately improved pupils' mapping skills as they progressed through school. The PTI training has transformed the very concept of maps in our school from pieces of paper with symbols, to a gateway to other worlds to explore and immerse yourself in. From pupils in Reception creating messy maps of an imaginary world and drawing chalk maps on the playground and 'jumping into them', to Year 3 pupils making sheet maps of their ideal dragon habitat, maps are now both useful and are vehicles for pupils' imaginations.

We know for certain the impact this has had on pupil attitudes through pupil and teacher voice; however, I think its impact was most noticeable through the incredible response we had to our first school mapping competition. We invited pupils in their own time to produce maps with the title, 'My Perfect Place'. The response was overwhelming and outstanding.



## Moving forward...

Our geography curriculum and plans are not static. We want to keep improving and getting better. By the time we submit this case study, we may have new and exciting plans for a fieldwork trip we have never done before. At this moment, working with the Eden River's Trust on some shared work on invasive species and they have invited us to get involved by taking groups of children to 'bash the Balsam'. We are in talks with our local museum about a project linking the history and geography of the path between the museum and our school.

What is certain, is that our Geography curriculum is now completely different to the, objectively and quantifiably, unsuccessful curriculum we had previously. We have talked about how our two main takeaways from the PTI event were fieldwork and mapping, however this may be a little reductive in the way that we have presented it. Fundamentally, Paula changed our thinking around geography, and the day represented a paradigm shift for us as teachers and as leaders. This is far more valuable and significant than taking away 'a couple of activities' because we can build upon it.

Just a couple of years ago, it would be unthinkable that pupils in our school would be making maps at home in their spare time, or that we would have popular Geography clubs running after school (Champions of Antarctica). We have just recently had a visit from Ofsted where Geography was a subject which was 'deep dived' and we were proud to see how our pupils responded to their questioning showing a real enjoyment and understanding of the subject.

Our staff tell us that they have had more Geography CPD in the last two years, than they have had in their whole career! Something we want to continue.

We felt passionate about submitting this case study, mainly for this reason. We know that the highest quality training can have a profound and lasting impact on outcomes for pupils. Yet often, access to CPD for teachers is dependent on postcode. Large metropolitan cities often have endless opportunities, surrounded by universities and industry. The cost of getting the best CPD to teachers in Cumbria is often prohibitive or impossible. The PTI has transformed this for us. We feel passionate about the impact that it can have and has had in our school and others like us.



## Leadership

When I asked our current geography leader to take over the subject, it is fair to say she was a little surprised and overwhelmed, having had no prior involvement or training in Geography.

Since then, her leadership of geography has been simply outstanding. Her knowledge of best practice in pedagogy has been inspirational for our staff (including myself) and we have all learned so much from her. I know from having attended the PTI conference alongside her, that much of the content covered that day is now fully embedded in our school curriculum. Our teachers are now confident in teaching the subject and our Geography leader is now completely passionate about the subject.

She has been able to deliver all the CPD to staff herself and this has been outstanding in quality.



### National Fieldwork Fortnight!



- ▶ Fieldwork is an essential part of a geographical education as well as being a National Curriculum requirement. It enables young people to develop their subject knowledge, gain a range of skills that are difficult to develop in the classroom and helps them to understand the 'messiness' of geographical reality.
- ▶ National Fieldwork Fortnight is designed to provide a focal point to encourage you to take your classes outside, whether in the school grounds, the local area or further afield.
- ▶ A simple, common theme of '**Environment**' has been chosen as this allows flexibility in deciding what to investigate to best advantage.
- ▶ This will be an opportunity to take our classes out to investigate, observe, discover, challenge, test out ideas and gain a deeper and wider understanding of the world around them.



### More ideas for activities

Which five things would you most like to see preserved in your area for ever?

How many different kinds of pollution can you find? How could these be changed for the better?

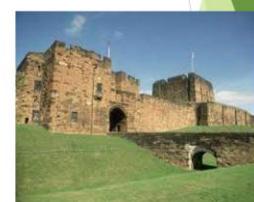
What are the main colours you can see? What effect would the removal of one colour have on the area?

How many jobs are linked to the roads around you? ( postal workers, street cleaners, gardeners etc)

Suggest the best place for a pedestrian crossing - what information would you need to make a decision?



[www.geography.org.uk](http://www.geography.org.uk)



1. Importance of/ strategies for development of fieldwork
2. Progression of mapping
3. Qualitative elements of fieldwork

## Primary Hub Exemplar Case Study - Art

We are a small primary school in the 40% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country. The rurality and perceived affluence of the town masks some significant rural poverty, social issues and small pockets of low adult literacy alongside professional and affluent families.

We have a high level of dyslexia significantly higher than the national average. In March 2024 data indicated that 33 pupils have experienced 1 ACE, 14 pupils 2 ACES, 4 pupils 3 ACES, 2 pupils 4 ACES and 1 pupil 5 ACES. The community is a varied mix of farming and related employment and affluent professional families and also families with significant challenges and an increasing problem with alcoholism and drugs misuse. The area in which we live is naturally beautiful and for some families, isolating. There is a lack of access to art galleries and local museums and as a result, we have tried to inspire access to art both for wellbeing purposes but also to address the gap in access to art in the area.

To mitigate the isolation, we aim to look outward and to partnerships with other schools to raise the standard of education provided. We are part of a group of 17 small schools and our partnerships provide high quality networks and training for subjects leads, leaders and SENDCos as well as some links for the children also. We are constantly striving to ensure that our isolation in terms of geography does not impact on our professionalism, and we are constantly seeking high quality training and provision to ensure our children receive the highest quality education that they deserve.

Inspired by the principles of the Professional Teaching Institute (PTI), our school embarked on a transformative journey to elevate the status of art and its impact on the holistic development of our pupils. At the core of this initiative was the invaluable contribution of Bob Sutcliffe OBE whom I engaged to inspire both staff and children. His expertise and passion ignited a spark of creativity and inspiration throughout our school community.

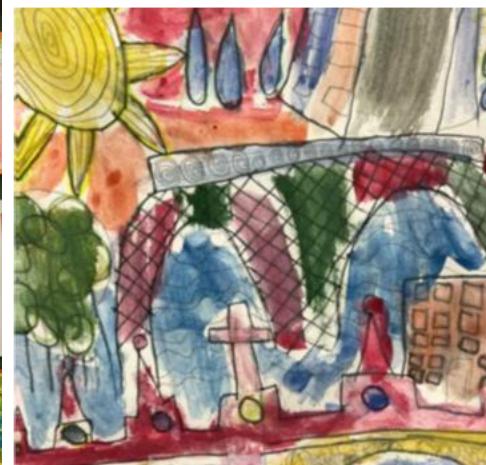
By immersing himself in the daily life of our school, teaching alongside our staff from Nursery to Year 6, Bob provided an exemplary model of effective practice. His ability to engage children of all ages, fostering confidence and a love of learning, was truly inspirational. Through his expert guidance, teachers were empowered to introduce challenging and enriching art experiences to their pupils, demonstrating the power of art to stimulate curiosity, imagination, and intellectual independence.

A testament to the impact of this initiative is the successful 'Tree Therapy' Art competition, which culminated in a prestigious exhibition. This project not only showcased the exceptional talent of our pupils but also fostered a deep appreciation for the natural world and its connection to artistic expression. By placing a strong emphasis on the well-being benefits of art, we have created a calm and inspiring atmosphere where children can flourish creatively.

Bob's expertise in progressive planning has revolutionised our approach to art education. By articulating clear learning objectives and making explicit connections between different art forms, he has empowered both pupils and teachers to develop a rich and nuanced understanding of the subject. The introduction of art-specific language has significantly enhanced pupils' ability to articulate their ideas and engage in critical dialogue about their work.

Moreover, Bob's commitment to the power of art as a therapeutic tool has had a profound impact on the lives of many. His support for a colleague battling terminal brain cancer, utilising art as a source of solace and hope, is a testament to his compassionate nature and belief in the transformative power of creativity. Similarly, his work with a Year 4 pupil who was unable to move from the neck down following a recent illness (now recovering) - this demonstrates the incredible potential of art to facilitate physical and emotional healing.

Through this transformative journey, we have not only enriched our art curriculum but also fostered a culture of creativity, collaboration, and well-being throughout the school. By empowering teachers, inspiring pupils, and harnessing the therapeutic power of art, we have created a legacy of excellence that will continue to shape the lives of future generations. The investment in Bob has fully paid off and has exceeded all expectations.



### How much does your child now love art?

- He loves art most of all. Having the opportunity to explore this at school has been
- a turning point in his confidence.
- A lot more since working with Bob
- To the moon and back!
- Both our girls enjoy art but X is particularly creative and is always drawing and crafting.
- Really enjoys it. At school and home
- Yes, he has enjoyed the art lessons this term. They do love art and enjoy the creation of their own art.
- X draws or paints daily. She loves nothing more than stealing printer paper and expressing herself.
- It's her most favourite hobby and loves her art lessons at school
- It's her favourite! X loves art both at home and school.
- X absolutely loves art
- Lots! She's passionately creative
- Loads!! Enough to do art club after school
- Very Much
- Really enjoys it.

