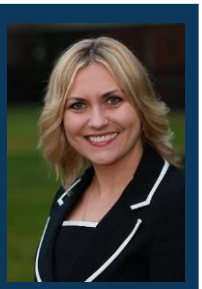
Head's Weekly Newsletter

Issue 6, 9 October 2020



Mrs Ania Hildrey, Headteacher, headteacher@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Dear Students, Families, Colleagues and Friends

Welcome to today's issue of the newsletter.

We are celebrating World Mental Health Day today and, in aid of Young Minds, many of the students and staff joined the fun in *#HelloYellow* campaign.

I too, have managed to dig our a summery yellow suit jacket and sported it today to raise awareness and give my full support to this worthy cause. A bit of fun, you might think, but, whilst the clothes colour we wear makes little difference, taking a clear stance does matter indeed.

As many of you know, I come from Poland. Whilst I have now lived outside it for longer than within it, undeniably, I bear the "motherland's" traits which were part of my familial gift to me and my cultural and societal upbringing when I was a youngster. One of those qualities, much cherished and unconditionally promoted as the only acceptable way of presenting oneself to the outside world in the 1970s Poland was: a smile. As a result, I guess, I smile a lot! I love smiling ☺

There have, however, been moments in my life when I wondered whether the expectation to be happy, to smile and to be positive has damaged me in some way – made me smile even when I did not feel like it, when I was unhappy… Perhaps.

One thing is for certain: it is good to encourage a "sunny disposition", of course. After all, nobody feel much better when those around us embody "doom and gloom" all the time. But we must be careful, too. Things are not always what they seem. The smile on someone's face does not always equal their genuine happiness, peace or safety.

Let us reflect, look deeper, seek to understand more and have a social curiosity when interacting with one another. It is often only when we dare to make the time to do that, that we truly get to know those around us.

Finally, nothing is permanent. This thought might be frightening at times when we fear all the good things in our lives not lasting forever. The thought does, however, also give rise to hope, as the opposite statement rings true "that, too, shall pass". When we struggle, when we feel that we can't go on, we most definitely can draw comfort from the transient nature of everything around us – bad times will pass, good times will return.

Today's newsletter explores this theme further, and, very importantly, today's Mental Health Day is just one day. Our support for mental health, however, is here for you all – every day.

With kindest regards and best wishes for the weekend,

Mrs A Hildrey
Headteacher

Deputy Headteacher

Mrs Emily Tobin, Deputy Headteacher

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Dear Families

Happy Birthday, John!

This week's assembly features John Lennon, who would have been celebrating his 80th birthday today (9th October.)

Arguably, one of John Lennon's most famous pieces of work is the stunning song: "*Imagine"*. The son has been the focus of our assembly this week, which fits in beautifully to our marking of World Mental Health Day on Saturday, 10 October 2020.

The aim of the World Mental Health Day is to recognise the difficulties some people face; difficulties that have undoubtedly been made more complex by the national pandemic we are currently facing. Lockdown has brought many such difficulties with it - missing loved ones, losing loved ones, isolation, fear and financial hardship, amongst others.

However, I do believe that the song *"Imagine*" offers a certain amount of hope. When questioned about the song, John Lennon said:

"If you can imagine a world at peace… then it can be true."

I feel like the last couple of weeks have brought to the fore that we are not yet "getting over" COVID-19. There is still a long way to go.

However, we can keep imagining what it is we are aiming for.

For many of us, some of the aims we imagine are achievable, even in the backdrop of one of the most complex situations we have ever faced. We can still do some of the things that help with our own mental health. We can get outside in fresh air, we can drink water and eat healthily, we can be active – even in our homes and we can stay connected with others - even if via technology.

I send this message with every best wish that, no matter how hard you find things at times, you may seek support, offer support and find some version of peace.

Best wishes for the week ahead,

Mrs Tobin

Deputy Headteacher

Care and Safeguarding

Ms Alison Twomey, Head of Care and Safeguarding

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As we reach the end of week 6 of this academic year, I want to take some time out to reflect on the progress the Care and Safeguarding Department has made so far, and thank my amazing team of staff who have made this happen.

It can be hard in these tough times to find the energy and motivation to keep going with the same levels of enthusiasm present at the start. COVID fatigue could have set in and left students, families and staff feeling overwhelmed by all of the changes and extra workload this situation has created. I am so pleased to report that, despite the new challenges, the whole school community has come together and embraced these times with a seemingly endless supply of positive thinking and 'can do' attitude.

Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in the boundless energy exhibited by our extraordinary receptionist, Bev Lunt. When you walk into a school as a visitor, you want to be greeted by a friendly face and a helpful attitude. This is also true of staff who work in a school every day. Bev helps us all feel more positive and happy to be at work. Nothing is too much trouble and she seamlessly keeps the reception function of the school flowing. In particular, Bev's diligence with attendance and Covid-19 absence has been a huge support to SLT and I know that many of our families have benefitted from supportive conversations with Bev this academic year. Bev is an outstanding colleague and I am incredibly privileged, to have her on my team.

All of our families will also have benefitted from the work completed by our EHCP coordinator, Jo Scarrott. This smooth running of this function of the school is essential if our students are to have their needs known and met. This year, EHCP reviews will be completed remotely but families will remain as fully involved as ever in their child's education. The process of ensuring we meet our statutory requirements with EHCPs rests with Jo. From planning the reviews of 271 students, ensuring the paperwork is completed and accurate, identifying the need to change banding and applying for Top up Funding; Jo does it all. But Jo does so much more than that and much of it is 'unseen' by families. Perhaps my most valued quality is Jo is her ability to never flinch when I pick up the phone and reel off a long list of administrative tasks that I need her to urgently squeeze in. I would not blame her for ignoring the phone when my number appears but she always answers, always get the request completed and the quality of her wok is faultless. Jo is supremely calm and collected and keeps me from descending into madness. I cannot thank her enough.

The final piece of the Care and Safeguarding jigsaw is Lisa Sharpe, probably the finest Family Adviser any school has the pleasure of employing. Quite simply, Lisa's batteries never run out. I am continually astounded by Lisa's ability to arrive at school each morning with the same levels of energy as the day before. Her diary is always full and yet, whenever I sneak my head around the door and add to her 'to-do' list, Lisa has completed these requests almost as soon as they have been made. I know that many families reading this have benefitted from Lisa's

support and I'm certain that you will join me in thanking her for caring so deeply about the issues than can adversely impact on family life. Lisa improves the lives of each and every family she supports. I can offer no greater statement of her worth than that.

As we move further into the school year, I am so grateful that I get to work alongside such a strong group of women. The Care and Safeguarding department will continue to ensure that our students and families are supported and receive additional care as soon as it is needed. Together, we will get through this uncertain period and come out smiling the other side

Ms Twomey
Head of Care and Safeguarding

School Business Support

Mrs Michelle Griffiths, Head of HR

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This week has seen 'National thank A Teacher Day' celebrated by schools across the country. We have said thank you to our Teachers with some staffroom treats and would like to share a BIG thank you to this vital staff group who provide invaluable support to our students!

This week we met our new School Improvement Partner, Mark Williams. In these busy times when work is so reactionary due to the environment we are working in, it would be easy to let the strategic management of the school take second place. However, we are as focussed as always on making Abbot's Lea the best specialist school in the world.

It is a bit earlier than usual, but this week we have issued flu vaccination vouchers to staff so we can try to protect their health as much as possible as the winter approaches and the threat of COVID remains. More information on the importance of flu vaccinations is available here: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/

Finally, I would like to say thank you to the chocolate fairy who left me a gift this morning in acknowledgement of World Mental Health Day, very much needed on a Friday afternoon!

Mrs Griffiths
Head of HR

Mr Andrew Cocklin, Head of Finance and Operations

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As we continue to go through a turbulent time, not knowing what the next day or week may bring, I hope that everyone is managing to keep safe and well.

The impact on schools is affecting everyone.

This week my daughter's nursery closed so I am currently juggling work and looking after her. I am viewing it as positive; days with my daughter that I do not normally get and we have had a fantastic, if very tiring, few days.

Our ICT Technician and I distributed a number of laptops out to families this week to help support students' currently home learning.

We are in a fortunate position as a school, to support staff and students with IT support, and to allow education provision to continue when face-to-face schooling is no longer available.

My thanks to Jennie Shipley for both preparing the laptops for use, and then helping with the delivery of them.

Mr Cocklin

Head of Finance and Operations

KEY STAGE UPDATES

Early Years and Key Stage 1
Miss O'Neill

Maria.O'Neill@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

This week we have been celebrating lots of different careers and skills across the key stage and throughout school. Everyone has developed their knowledge of different types of jobs.

Ireland

In Ireland class, we have had the best time learning about the world around us. We have explored jobs and skills as well as the changes happening around us. We have enjoyed our daily outdoor activities relating to role-play and helping us to develop our gross motor skills. We particularly enjoyed being farmers and digging up the vegetables. Have a great weekend.

Wales

Wales Class have had an exciting week completing activities based on the fairy tale The Gingerbread man! We looked at our clues based on the story we were looking at this week, the children were very good detectives and guessed it after three clues! We have read the story and used the Beebots to retell it. We also made our own gingerbread men by weighing, following instructions and exploring our bossy verbs. We then decorated them! They tasted so yummy! We matched the number on the dice to the correct numeral to create gingerbread men! We added bows and string hair to them. We also took part in our weekly dance lesson with Patricia. We created movements for sea creatures! We have had a wonderful week this week and are looking forward to next week!

Have a lovely weekend,

Wales Class

Key Stage News and Updates

Key Stage 2
Key Stage Leader: Miss Sell
Lorna.sell@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Italy

This week Italy have been focusing on the topic of autumn and have created autumn wreaths using colours that they think represent autumn. In English, they have been reading the book 'The Day the Crayons Quit' via zoom calls with Mrs. Daley, and they have managed to create their own unusual images using different colours, including a purple fire engine, an orange whale and a rainbow which sits on the floor instead of in the sky. Super work Italy, so proud of how you have all adapted to the changes this week! You are all amazing!

Portugal

This week in Class Portugal, we have been learning all about adventures! We have thought about what adventures we would like to go on and read a story called 'Lost and Found' by Oliver Jeffers all about a boy and a penguin who go on a big adventure together! This inspired us to go on our own adventure on the minibus - we drove around Liverpool and spotted some sights such as the Liver Buildings and the cathedrals.

We also looked at our own adventures and talked about adventures staff had been on, we looked at photographs of Mr Flanagan's skydive, which we then recreated outside using an egg and testing out our own parachute! It was very exciting!

We also loved taking part in Mental Health Awareness Day and took part in lots of activities to help us keep our minds happy and healthy!

We are looking forward to learning all about autumn next week!

Have a lovely weekend! ☺

France

Hi France class!
Well done to each of you for working so hard this week and for adapting so well to the changes to our usual routine. We have spent lots of time this week completing academic assessments, which has meant our normal lesson timetable has been slightly different. All of the pupils have coped so well with the changes to this and have completed the assessments and other activities happily. Next week we will be looking at the story 'Knuffle Bunny' and completing our own 'Knuffle Bunny' search around the school grounds- fingers crossed it stays dry!
Keep up the good work class France!'

Canada

Canada class have had a different week, having to stay at home to self-isolate. They have all been brilliant and have adapted to the new, temporary way of learning and completing their activities from home. We have had daily zoom sessions and it was so nice to see each other, even from a screen. We have drawn our own emotions monsters and read different stories during our zoom sessions. The staff would like to say well done for all the hard work and understanding the pupils have shown this week, and also, a big thank you to all the parents and carers who have supported learning from home. Have a lovely weekend and stay at home!'

USA

USA started the week by looking at our different emotions. We watched the film 'Inside out,' and in groups' we spoke about what different emotions' we experience and how the different characters felt.

We have been having looking at nouns this week and we did a noun hunt in our classroom. We also put other nouns we knew into the categories of place, person or thing.

We have also been working on our times tables and using our number skills to help us solve problems.

This week class USA had so much fun making tunes with different bells. We had to follow what bells to ring to make the right note and we were able to use our sharing and turn taking skills. We think Class USA could enter Britain's Got Talent with their bell ringing skills!

Spain

Spain class have shared their weekend news with the class and learned about the seasons and what we wear and what the trees look like in each season. The class created their own picture using paint and corks to create leaves on the bare branches. Continuing the theme around seasons Spain class have made bird feeders from cereal and have made owls from paper plates and pinecones.

On Thursday the class learnt about kindness and how to be nice to each in the afternoon the class used the microwave to make bacon sandwiches.

Have a good weekend

Spain class

Key Stage News and Updates

Key Stage 3
Key Stage Leader: Mr Richard Hodgson
Richard.Hodgson@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Brazil
This week, learning has been slightly different in Brazil class with all students learning remotely from home. Students have worked well completing Maths and English activities on Education City. Students have also accessed and completed activities on Purple Mash and Bug Club. During our Zoom sessions, we have focussed on social interaction with students playing Pictionary, Boy/Girl, Kahoot and matching games. During our Zoom sessions, Mr Roach has set challenges, one of which was to make another person in our house a drink. The students have participated brilliantly this week and should be extremely proud of their efforts and adapting to the change. We look forward to another fun week of online learning next week, with more challenges to come!

Peru
Peru have had a great week! In English we have been looking at the story '*A Kind of Spark'* and been writing our own stories. Maths we have been looking at money and recognising denominations and calculating amounts. We did a science experiment using eggs to represent our teeth, and how sugar affects our teeth, using different sugary drinks. Have a lovely restful weekend and see you all next week.

Mozambique
Mozambique class have been busy this week, and have been looking at poetry in English and developed our creative writing using alliteration. We have also been learning about significant black people in history. Due to being international space week, we have been learning about space and all about astronauts. We have also learned how you wash your hair in space!

Botswana
This week in Botswana, for our food tech lesson we made toasties. We chose what ingredients we wanted to use, prepared the toasties independently and then enjoyed them together as a class. Some of us tried new things like tomato puree, tomatoes, onions and strawberry jam - ALL TOGETHER. We hope you all have a lovely weekend from Botswana Class.

Madagascar
Another good week for Madagascar! We have been focusing on improving our writing this week, using correct punctuation, spelling a grammar in our sentences. To celebrate Black History Month, we have been discussing Martin Luther King and his famous 'I have a dream' speech - lots of mature discussion and great ideas about how we can make the world a better place!

Kenya
This week in Kenya class, we have been continuing with learning about the different genre in literature. We have worked in groups and created a freeze frame of a chosen genre. It was great fun. We have looked at some film trailers and talked about the advantages and disadvantages of both films and books. We have also studied extracts from some classic literatures such as Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Gulliver's Travels, and answered comprehension questions on them. In science, we looked at where the major organs are located in our body and what their functions are. For one of our topic lessons this week, we

tried to make stress balls using balloons, play-doh, flour and rice. It was really tricky to stuff the balloons. We helped each other and tried to problem solve when we struggled. Some of our students' really tried hard and did not give up. Well done for the perseverance!

Seychelles

This week in Seychelles class we have had so much fun, In English we have been creating our own News to present to the class, we have all enjoyed planning our news and creating PowerPoints too. Everyone has worked really hard with this! In P.E this week, we have been playing Basketball learning new skills of passing the ball and had a great game together. We have also spent time cutting different facial features out of pictures and mixing them up to create new collages in Art this week, we all really enjoyed this! Well done Seychelles class you have all worked really hard this week. Keep it up!

Fiji

A full week of isolation complete for Fiji class and I must say the staff team are so proud of every single one of you! We have had some brilliant zoom sessions. We have discussed, debated, researched and even completed some online shopping. Lots of the work that has been produced using the online platforms has been to a really high standard. We have also enjoyed some great social interaction time and played games such as Bingo and we had a Scavenger Hunt! A great week overall. Have a wonderful weekend Fiji and we will see you back on Zoom on Monday!

Cape Verde

This week in Cape Verde we have looked at the book 'Archies War', we have created our own scrapbooks based on the lockdown. We spoke about the NHS while we made a rainbow in a jar for our science experiment. We have made monster cookies in food tech this week as we baked along with Miss Hamilton on Zoom. In Maths, we have looked at length, ordering items in the class from shortest to longest and utilising our greater than and less than signs. We have spoken about how the lockdown helped the environment, looking at the dolphins in Italy!

We have played some great quizzes created by students in Cape Verde on Kahoot this week too! Unfortunately the students WON!!! We will try again next week!

Have a lovely weekend everyone and we will see you on Monday, Cape Verde ☺

Key Stage News and Updates

Key Stage 4
Key Stage Leader: Mr Lyons
matthew.lyons@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Australia

It has been a really great week of home based learning for Australia students this week. We have engaged in a diverse range of learning activities such as monitoring our heart rate doing PE, debating about our Prime Minister Boris Johnson and even live baking on zoom.

We are really proud of the maturity and effort in learning shown by Class Australia this week. Well done to all our students!

Papua New Guinea

We would just like to say a really big well done to every student in class PNG this week for their fantastic attendance on Zoom. We understand how hard it can be to adapt a new way of learning (again) and all the distractions of home that come with it, but we are proud of you. Keep it up and we hope to see the same and more next week.

On Zoom this week we have covered many different topics including; The Raven by Edgar Allan Poe, space exploration, black history month, maths riddles and we have managed to celebrate Mental Health Awareness day. We have been super busy and the students have worked hard doing lots' of research and presentation tasks, we have also had many discussions around these topics which has been really interesting. It has been lovely to see everyone get so involved. Well done PNG!

New Zealand

This week has been a strange one in many senses. Mainly because we have not physically been in school but instead carried on learning remotely.
It was good to have Mental Health Awareness Day today as it made us reflect on the challenges we have had and overcome and the positives; the things we have achieved and appreciation for each other. Well done Class New Zealand you have been fantastic!
You have been set lots' of challenges and you have risen to them; from researching a role model for Black History Month, tackling challenges on TTRS, practising your life skills at home to writing your own gothic influenced story. It has been great seeing so many of you attend each zoom session and well done to everyone who has completed the tasks set. Keep going and send your work to newzealand@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
Have a good weekend and see you on zoom on Monday at 10AM!

Samoa

It has been a really good week of home based learning for Samoa students this week. Engaging in a diverse range of learning activities such as monitoring our heart rate doing PE, debating about our Prime Minister Boris Johnson and even live baking on zoom.

We are really proud of the effort in learning shown by Class Samoa this week. Well done to all our students!

Tasmania

This week in Tasmania class, we have been working remotely so have enjoyed lots of home learning and Zoom lessons. We have experimented with Food Technology and sent home resources to make spaghetti bolognaise, fruit salad and pitta bread pizzas. Some of the class have worked hard on their own PowerPoint presentations about their interests. We have learnt about a range of subjects, such as Greek Mythology, Zoology and Football! Well done Tasmania class, we are really proud of your home learning and look forward to seeing you back in class again soon.

Key Stage News and Updates

Key Stage 5
Key Stage Leader: Mr Ryan Mason
Ryan.Mason@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

This week, the students in KS5 have been beginning to look at what travel options are available to them as they seek to become more independent. They have also looked at ways in which they can travel safely on public transport and looked at how to keep safe as a pedestrian when crossing the road or when cycling.

They also really enjoyed catching up with former student, George too as he shared his journey from student to Intern to Apprentice as part of the Careers Hub week of work initiative. Our students enjoyed hearing his story and asking him questions. It is fair to say they were inspired to experience their own successes in the future!

Christmas Island and Malawi

This week in KS5, the students have continued practicing their employability skills. They have started their travel training and are continuing to explore their options for when they leave Abbot's Lea School. On Thursday, they had a zoom meeting with an ex-student in which he told us about his supported apprenticeship as well as what it's like to have a job and to get paid. It has been a lovely week, and the students are all looking forward to the weekend.

Happy Birthday!

TO

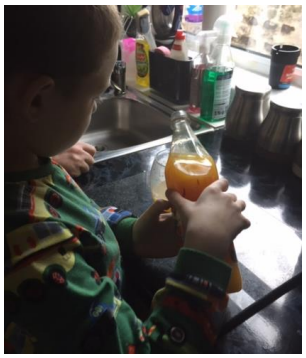
Achille for the 9 October
Alfie for 10 October
Charlie for 15 October

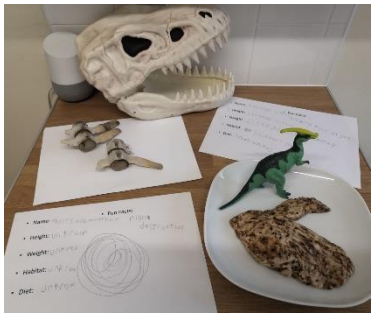
We wish you all a **Wonderful Birthday** and have fun!

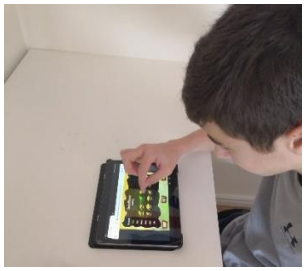
Students of the Week

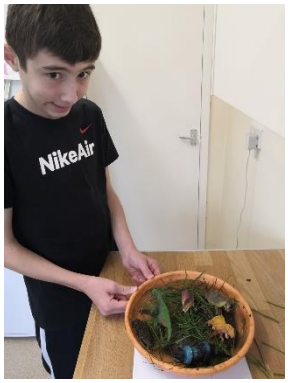
Early Years and Key Stage One		
Ireland	Sonny	for great independent skills
Wales	Lucas	for listening well ad following staff instructions.
Nurture		
Spain	Jack	for never giving up and completing all his activates
Cape Verde	Isaac	for making exceptional choices
Tasmania	Alex	for his participation in Zoom lessons this week
Key Stage Two		
Italy	Jack	for always being the first to help his classmates when they are struggling with their timetables and assisting Miss Laird by sorting out the chairs each morning. Well done Jack, you have been outstanding!
Portugal	Mikey	for trying lots of new foods!
France	Michael	for always having a positive attitude to work and trying his best in all activities!
Canada	Charlie	for participating in the zoom sessions
USA	Jacob	for producing some fantastic work and listening to staff instructions
Key Stage Three		
Brazil	Martin	for attending his first ever Zoom sessions
Peru	Mason	for being here every day
Mozambique	Sean	for trying really hard to follow staff instructions
Botswana	Ethan	for really good reading this week and trying new things during our food tech lesson.
Madagascar	Kyle	for fantastic writing in English this week
Kenya	Lexie	for putting 100% effort into her work to ensure both the content and presentation are outstanding
Seychelles	Rhys	for listening and implementing staff instructions well. Well Done Rhys!
Fiji	Jake	Jake has logged into every single session and completed all of the tasks that have been set. Jake has also felt confident enough to share his thoughts and ideas during zoom. Well done Jake!!
Key Stage Four		
Australia	Liam	for his hard work in completing all the challenges during the zoom lessons
Papua New Guinea	Jack	for his fantastic science exploration work!
New Zealand	Leon	For positive contributions in zoom sessions all week
Samoa	Matthew	for overcoming nerves and getting involved with a different class and teachers on Zoom
Malawi	Liam	for starting his new internship with the facilities team
Christmas Island	Lewis	for being supportive in class and helping his peers with their work

Week 6 Photos





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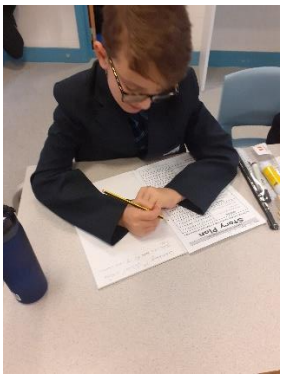
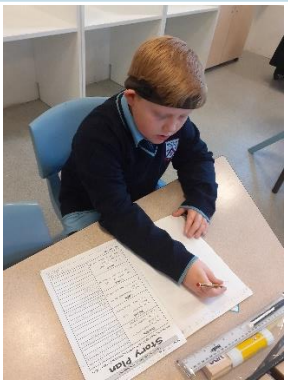
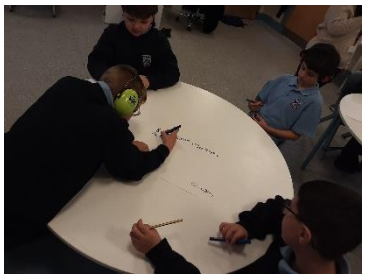
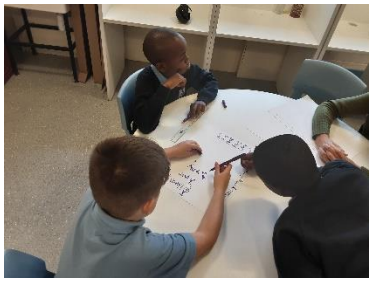
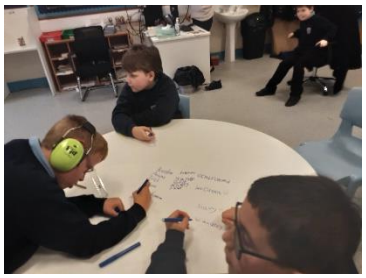
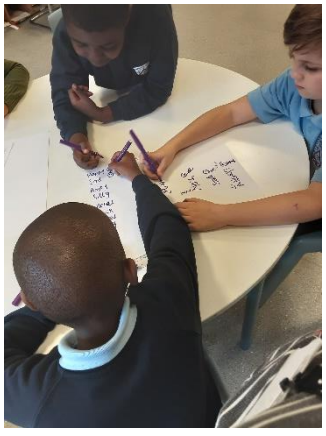
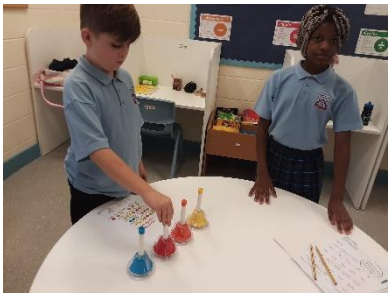



Clover

Ciaran's amazing
life skills!
06/10/2020

Winter
Summer
Spring
Autumn

Josh

SKYLINE
SKYLINE
PIC•COLLAGE

STAFF