



Black Voices Week 2022

We had a great week celebrating this most important of occasions. After a whole-school assembly on Monday hosted by a balding, yet ruggedly handsome and charming man who looks at least ten years younger than his 42 years (I used this 'joke' on my blog entry and thought it warranted reusing in this newsletter... please indulge me,) each year group enjoyed a range of activities. Here are their recounts of the same – I hope you enjoy reading them.



Mr Faith, Diversity Coordinator / Key Stage Two Coordinator

In Reception, we have been reading a variety of poems and rhymes from across the world, including 'Tingalayo,' a fun Caribbean tune about a little donkey. We also read 'Nature Trail,' a joyful rhyming book written by the poet Benjamin Zephaniah and 'Riley Can Be Anything' by Davina Hamilton. The children discussed various occupations and thought about which occupations they would like to do when they are older. We talked about the qualities you need when wanting to achieve something and how, when you try hard and practise, you can succeed. Also this week, we have been learning about Mae Jemison, who was the first Black African American woman to travel into space. The children learnt how Mae wasn't always encouraged to become an astronaut but through lots of hard work and by not forgetting her dreams she eventually achieved what she wanted.



This week, Year 1 has been enjoying the book 'Chicken in the Kitchen' by Nnedi Okorafor. Set in Nigeria during the New Yam Festival, it tells the story of a little girl called Anyaugo and a giant chicken! The children have been looking at adjectives to describe the chicken in English and have created some eye-catching feathers using pastels and watercolours in Art. In line with celebrating voices from different cultures, Year 1 were lucky enough to have a visit from class parent Wing Kei, who read a Chinese poem to the year before helping them create artwork inspired by it.



Year 2's English this week was based on a beautiful book called 'Black is a Rainbow Colour' by Angela Joy. Over the week, we listened to the book being read online by Angela Joy, asked the children what they liked about the book and they picked out the illustrations and the rhyme. Then the children drew their own interpretation of a rainbow which included the colour black. We also discussed the meaning of the book, which is full of history. We talked about the meaning of the word culture and then focused in particular on the reference to Martin Luther King. We learnt a little bit about him and read parts of his 'I Have a Dream' speech. The children then wrote their own speeches about their dreams for a better world. Later in the week, we looked at rhyme and the children wrote a poem in the style of 'Black is a Rainbow Colour.'



Year 4 were visited by the wonderful Maggie (class parent,) who spoke about her childhood / teenage life in Zambia and how life changed for her when she moved to London 20+ years ago. We loved having Maggie in, as it showed the children a living, breathing example of what Black Voices Week is all about – showcasing people of African and Caribbean descent who have made a real difference to our community, and Britain in general. Year 5 had a special visit from the poet Kat Francois, who had the children using their senses to write a free verse poem about themselves. The children loved joining in as Kat performed some of her poems and had a lot of fun writing and performing their own at the end of the session.

Our very own Rev. Denis also hosted a whole school assembly on Wednesday and spoke powerfully as he shared his knowledge with the children.

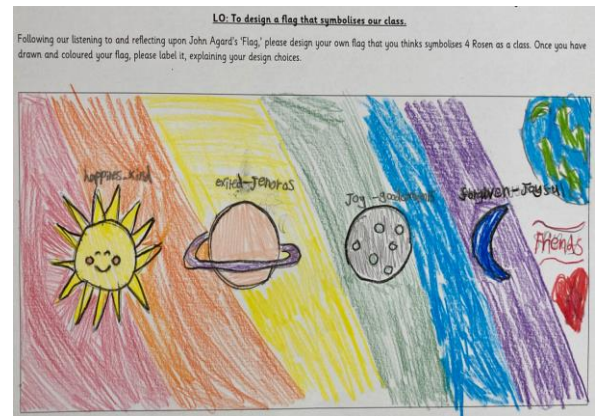
Show Racism The Red Card

A huge thank you to Miss Hall, RHE Coordinator, for hosting an assembly and organising the events of this day. More information on it can be found here: <https://www.ststephensce.lbhf.sch.uk/show-racism-the-red-card/>

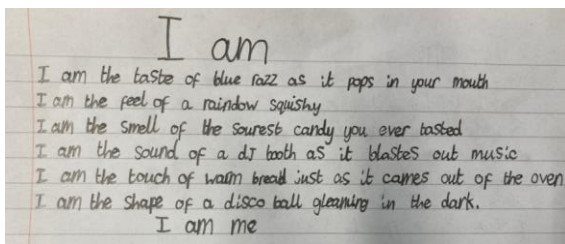
Year 3 have been learning all about Grace Nichols and her country of birth, Guyana. We learned a lot about the country and found out about her life. We've enjoyed listening to her read her own poems, especially 'For Forest' and 'Sugar Cake Bubble.' We read more of her poems throughout a very busy week and chose our favourite poems to perform with our friends. We also read 'Morning' and wrote our own versions of the poem, which we got to perform in class.



During Black Voices Week, Year 4 studied poems by John Agard and Derek Walcott ('I am Googol,' 'Flag' and 'Checking Out Me History' by Agard; 'After The Storm' by Derek Walcott.) Focusing on one per lesson, we read each poem as a class, reflected upon its meaning as part of a whole-class discussion and completed activities inspired by the poems that were both fun and allowed us to think about the meanings behind the poems. As part of studying these poems we also learned about Agard and Walcott's home countries of Guyana and St Lucia.



This week, Year 5 have been using the poetry of Malorie Blackman as inspiration and springboard for their own poems. We have looked at haikus, using her poem 'Facing the Truth' which is a poem made up of verses which are each a haiku of their own. The children worked in small groups to practise and perform a section of the poem. We discussed Blackman's careful choice of words and expressions in the poem. Next, we moved onto personification, specifically of clouds. The children continued Blackman's poem 'Cloudbusting,' with a verse about the clouds. Finally, we looked at limericks.



For Black Voices Week, Year 6 studied the works of Benjamin Zephaniah. We started off by analysing the colloquial language he uses and discussed how he has picked a topic important to him to talk about through his poem. As this is a poem that discusses the racism Zephaniah received and how he does not let it affect him in his day-to-day life, the children planned and wrote their own poems based on issues that are important to them. Once they were written, the class performed them to the rest of the class. They had some really great ideas, such as climate change, animal cruelty, coronavirus and racism and spoke passionately about each subject.



Also, a brilliant assembly by Year 6 Ayres focused on Black Voices Week, highlighting local people who made a big impact. The LBHF Black Music History Trail featured heavily & the children finished with an inspiring performance of dub poet & musician, J. Chambers' 'Letter to Self.' Please check out our Twitter page to see them in action - @StStephensLBHF