

Black Voices Week 2023



We had a great time celebrating this very important week. After a whole-school collective worship session on Monday, each year group enjoyed a range of activities during the week. Here are their recounts of the same – I hope you enjoy reading them!

Mr Faith, Diversity Coordinator / Key Stage Two Coordinator

Reception

To celebrate Black Voices Week, the children have been learning about Maresia-Liburd Spencer. The children learnt that she co-founded an organisation called 'Black Deaf Today' and that she has helped connect the Black deaf community. The children learnt lots of Makaton gestures to use alongside words to help them communicate with each other.



Year 1

On Monday, the children learnt about Floella Benjamin and wrote adjectives describing her. In the words of Year 1, she really is "fabulous"! We then created some artwork inspired by Trinidadian artist Cynthia Mclean. We designed beautiful vibrant houses inspired by the bright colours and stunning scenes depicted in her work. But the real star event of the week had to be making our own hand puppets ahead of the live puppet show called 'Anansi & the Lost Sun'.



Year 2

This week, we have been focusing on Black History Month with the theme of 'Celebrate our sisters'. Year 2 have been focusing on the awesome space scientist / TV presenter Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock who, despite moving schools 13 times, went on to invent equipment for telescopes and satellites to enable scientists to see far into space and understand more about climate change.

Also, as part of Black History Month, students watched an Anansi puppet workshop, based on Caribbean folklore, and children made their own puppets linked to the story.

Year 4

This year's Black Voices Week has been an amazing one! It started with a whole-school assembly led by Mr Faith, where we outlined the activities that laid ahead.

In-class, Year 4 worked on a series of activities related to our notable BVW person, who was Diane Abbott, the first-ever female Black MP. In doing this, we learned about her life story and wrote letters 'to her' asking for her help in handling the homelessness crisis.

We were also visited by master puppeteer Caroline Yawa Ada, who led the two classes in creating traditional puppets. The whole school also got to enjoy her production of 'Anansi' – wonderful stuff!



Year 3

We have been learning all about Malorie Blackman this week. We watched a very informative video and read a detailed text all about Malorie's perseverance and following her passions.

Throughout the week, we completed a comprehension on her life and create our own posters all about our passions (which are now on display in our classroom). Lots of us chose reading too- just like Malorie! We even found one of her books in the library during our library session.

This week we also had Caroline join us, who did a super lightning craft workshop with the children to make a red rooster – a character from the 'Anansi' series. On Friday, we enjoyed the Anansi Puppet Show.



Year 5

On Monday, Year 5 were joined by linguist, Sylvia, who came in to teach the children the origin of the Creole language and some key phrases. Sylvia explained to the children that today Creole is a legitimate fully-functioning recognised language that is spoken in St Lucia and Dominica in the Caribbean. Sylvia explained to the children that although Creole has similarities with some French words, it is not French and a language in its own right.



Throughout this week, we have also been studying Black British woman of influence. We have been researching the work of Dame Elizabeth Anionwu, discovering that she set up the first sickle cell and thalassaemia counselling services in London. She has also used her training to become the first sickle cell and thalassaemia nurse specialist. From this research, the children are in the process of writing an information text about her and her influence and impact on British nursing.

Year 6

There was a big celebration here of Black Voices Week with a focus on women who were 'first'. The children heard from Mr Faith during Monday's Assembly talking about trailblazers from Baroness Doreen Lawrence and Diane Abbot to Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock and from Lashana Lynch to Christine Ohuruogu. In Y6 the children went in to more detail learning about Nicola Adams, one of the stars of London 2012 when she lit up the ring to become the first woman to win an Olympic boxing gold medal.

The children hugely enjoyed the English topic on poetry this week by first analysing a brilliantly inspiring poem by Benjamin Zephaniah. His 'No Problem' poem confronts his experiences of racism and how he is now able to not let it affect him in his day to day life. As a result, the children planned and wrote their own poems based on issues that are important to them. Once they were written, the class performed them with some powerful messages hitting home on majors issues including bullying, climate change, equality, sexism and racism – each spoke really passionately about their subject.

Dr Mar'ene Edwin from Goldsmith's University popped in on Thursday to lead a brilliant workshop on Caribbean Creoles. She began by explaining how the language(s) evolved and explored the geography of the islands with the children. Next she taught them the numbers to 20 in French creole before playing a game of Bingo. Finally, with a translation sheet of key words in front of them, she read a traditional Anansi story. We've asked her back for next year!

