

Courageous Advocacy – Environmental Awareness

At Stanion Church of England Primary School, all the children have been a part of an exciting project that has led to a wonderful Art Gallery that has been shared with the whole school community.

It began with the Church Council considering some changes that could be made to help our environment. They created some artworks to inspire everyone to think about making small changes, and shared these messages around the school:



“It has made everyone think about the small things we can change, like switching things off when we aren’t using them- or putting rubbish in the right places.”

We looked at some advocates for change, and shared their approach in Collective Worship. We realised that we all have a voice, and we can all make a difference.

The children decided that we could share environmental messages very powerfully through artwork. Mrs Leighton and Mrs Ettridge worked together to help the children to develop art skills at the same time as encouraging everyone to think about the importance of caring for our planet. The children helped to plan an Art Gallery event for the whole school. Every child in the school produced a beautiful piece of artwork, based on endangered creatures around the world. They recycled old materials to create collage backgrounds, and used their sketching skills to draw the creatures, with each group showing such skill.

The project has involved so many within the school community, and the governors on the Ethos Committee have been so proactive in enabling the project to have such impact. Jo Taylor is the Chair of the Ethos Committee:

“It has been an incredible privilege to be able to work with all our children on this project, and to see the joy and remarkable effort they all put in to create their amazing work. This coupled with some great conversations about the world and how they want to be ambassadors for change, they want to

look after our planet and appreciate it for all its beauty. A perfect example of how fun and learning go hand in hand creating an environment where children can flourish.”

The school hall was turned into a gallery for an evening, with parents attending with their children. Parents commented so positively on the quality of the children’s artwork, and the powerful messages from the pictures and the accompanying writing.



Head teacher, Mr Jones, said:

“ The children on our Church Council wanted to raise awareness about protecting the environment and the animals at risk of extinction. We are extremely proud of the artwork the children have produced using materials that would have otherwise been sent to landfill.

The art gallery event was a huge success with so many visitors commenting on the wonderful artwork and the impact of the campaign.

Our children are true advocates for change and have raised much needed awareness and funding in the process. “

The event was judged by governors and the vicar, Reverend Heather Lowe. It was very difficult to pick winners when the quality of work was so high.



From EYFS to Year 5 and 6, the children showed creativity, skill- and such interest and commitment to every part of the project:

“We have all realised that we need to act NOW”.

“I have really listened and I feel good that we have all made a difference. I am going to carry on making lots of little differences at home, too!”

“I think it is amazing that we did so much amazing art from things that would have been thrown away. It makes you think about whether you need to throw it away or if you could actually re-use it.”

“We have shown lots of school values, like showing love for the planet and each other. We have also shown respect- and perseverance, too.”

The children also talked about the pride they felt in their artwork. They have worked hard to improve their sketching skills, focusing on proportion, shading techniques and perspective- and the children have applied their techniques so well within their masterpieces.

Responses from the children have included:

“Some people who don’t usually do lots of art have learnt new skills and they have produced beautiful pieces and they feel really proud.”

“I said WOW when I saw all the work in the hall because it looked so AMAZING!”

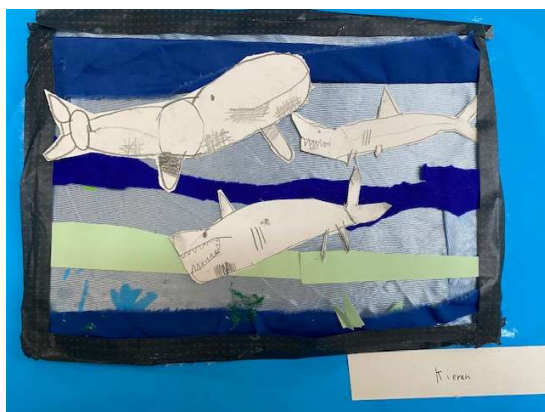
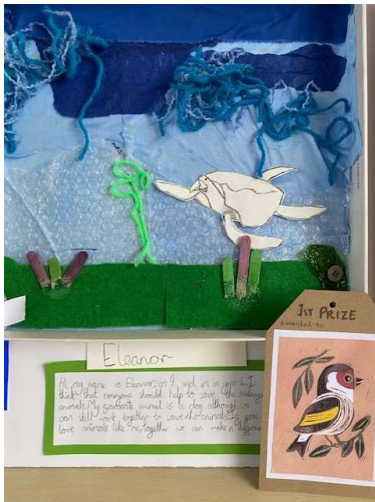
“I feel really proud that my work looks like a masterpiece.”

“It felt very special to look at all the work of the whole school.”

Year 5 and 6 focused on the Rainforest. They created backgrounds in watercolour, with the focus on perspective. They sketched their individually-researched animals, applying a range of shading techniques to create depth and movement. Their artwork was framed with picture frames that had been discarded by a local shop.



The children in Year 3 and 4 studied endangered life in the oceans. They created collage backgrounds on discarded cardboard and box lids. Their creatures were sketched with a range of techniques to show light and shade. What amazing results they achieved!



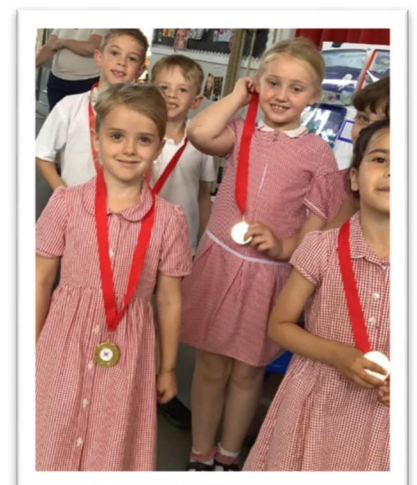
"I can't believe what we made from lots of rubbish. The backgrounds looked so effective and I think our creations looked just like the ocean."

"I like that our pictures were all different even though we started with the same set of materials."

"I am very proud of my sketching skills. I have remembered to use lots of skills and I think my whale looks like a real whale!"

"I think everyone is feeling proud of their work."

In Year 1 and 2 the children learnt about endangered animals in the Grasslands, and their backgrounds were created with fabric from a local curtain-maker that would have ended up in landfill.



The efforts of all of the children were rewarded with a special medal that celebrated their work as advocates for change.

In EYFS the children made a wonderful group collage from recycled materials. They researched and made their own penguins, and everyone has enjoyed sharing their work.



The Art Club, too, have had an environmental focus, creating beautiful pictures from brown packaging paper, and completing them with a small watercolour of the endangered Large Blue Butterfly and bumble bees.



The children's work was also shared with the Deputy Mayor, Emily Fedorowycz. She has a strong interest in environmental issues and was delighted to share the artwork:

"It was wonderful to see how each individual has engaged with the project- their connection with the environment really came across, as well as their sense of empathy for the animals. It was a privilege to get to see these pieces of artwork, to see their interpretations and their inventiveness in giving new life to old materials. The recycled element of this project was really exciting and you can see how it has sparked new inspiration as to how we can use old materials for something new, whilst at the same time protecting the wildlife of the world."

Following on from this project, Emily will be coming into school to talk further with the children about small changes that we can make in our daily lives to help to look after our planet.

Some of the artwork will also be displayed in Lowick Church as part of their own special art display. We think everyone will be very impressed!

Amanda de Choisy, the Chair of Governors, praised the work and the attitudes of the children:

“Our children have been inspirational throughout this project and have taught us that we can all be ‘Advocates for Change’, regardless of age.”

Well done to everyone!