

Hope Tree School....

Skye's News

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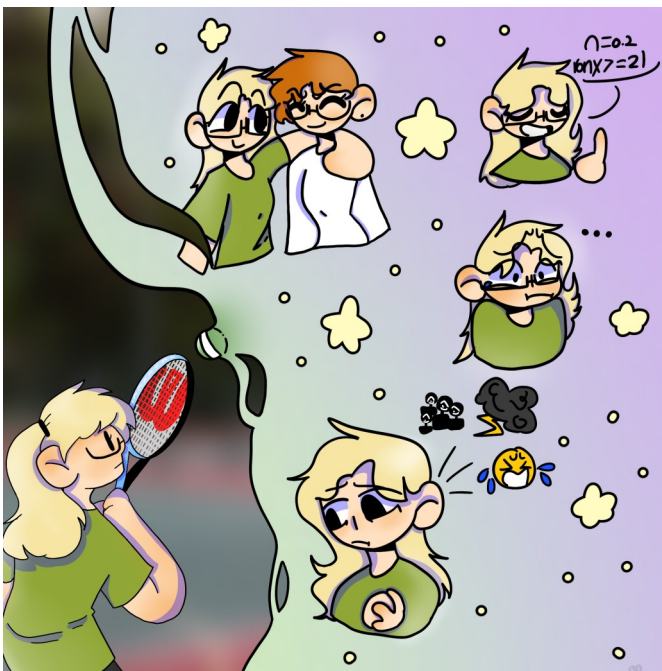
Hope Tree School in the winter

All our students returned after the Christmas break to cold and damp weather at school. Despite the dull days students have continued to access a full curriculum, visit the Alpaca farm regularly and, when there has been the tiny glimmer of sunshine outside, they have been taking advantage of all our outside space has to offer. Trampolining, table tennis games and running up and down the garden have all been regular activities. We have added picnic



benches to our garden and we are hoping that once the weather warms up a little, or at the very least is not raining, our learning can be taken outside on a more regular basis which many of our students really enjoy. We are preparing our vegetable patch to be used in the spring alongside feeding the worm farm any scraps which goes a little way to helping our school be more environmentally friendly.

A day in the life of an autistic girl.

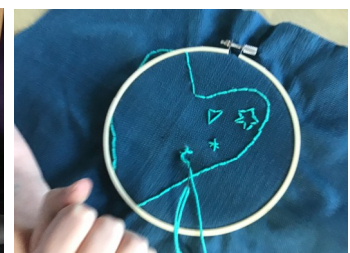


One of our students has been busy working hard on a drawing of what it feels like to be her. This includes things she likes, having friends at school, a good day when maths is going well for her. A not so good day when she is feeling overwhelmed by life and what it is like to have sensory difficulties, particularly noise, crowds and disruption around her. Being autistic can have many strengths, but at times can be at odds with the wider world. Hope Tree School continues to give our students a safe space to be themselves, understand what it means to be autistic and celebrate the many strengths of autistic girls.

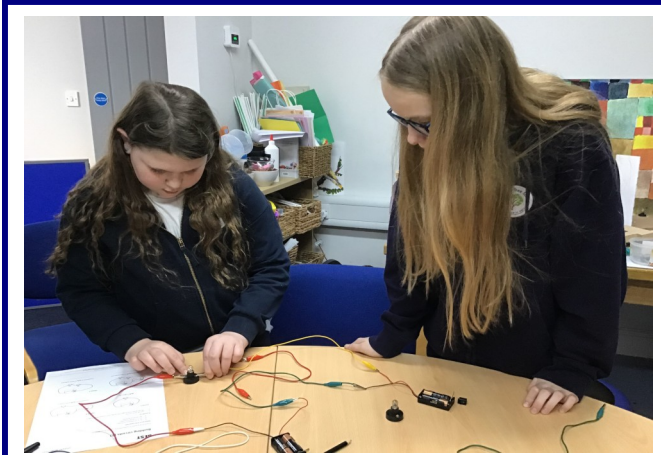
A card from the King



On the death of his Mother, Queen Elizabeth, one of our students sent a card of condolence to Buckingham Palace. We were surprised and delighted to receive a card from HRH King Charles III for our student to thank her for her card. Well done to Leigh who was thoughtful and wanted to send the card.



Student Development



This term we have introduced peer support opportunities. Our students often like to help each other. Our first peer support badge was awarded to Bethany for consistently offering support to other students. She has volunteered to spend time with new students, showing them how to do things at school whilst they learn new routines. She has also supported younger students with their work once she has completed her own.

Another really important aspect of school life is collaborating and working alongside each other to achieve a goal. Two students worked together to build this lego model. Although the model took quite a while, they persevered to the very end finishing just in time for the end of the day.



School trips

We have undertaken three school trips this term. Our first school trip involved catching a bus into Cambridge where students had the opportunity to pay for the bus tickets as they boarded the bus. We then walked to a local bookshop where students chose a book that they would like to add to our school library in addition to choosing a book that another classmate would like. We stopped off on the way back to the bus station for a well earned hot chocolate or drink in a café and then returned to school with our bundle of books. All our students were outstanding on the day.



Our second school trip took us on a short train ride up to Ely. For some of our students this was quite anxiety provoking but with good preparation, a range of anxiety management skills and plenty of support and encouragement our students did wonderfully well. On arrival in Ely we took a walk to Oliver Cromwell's House. Whilst there our students participated in an 'escape room' activity which they enjoyed and managed to get out in very good time, working in pairs and in a team they managed to solve all the puzzles—well done to all.



Our third school trip took us a bit further afield to Bedfordshire where our students had the opportunity to engage in a range of outdoor activities. The sun shone, although a little chilly, and our students made great progress with their skills and confidence.



A blizzard at school!!

On a cold and wintery day in March the students were all working hard in their classroom when the first flakes of snow began to fall. Before long the flakes were falling thick and fast and the wind was swirling them round



and round. The weather outside was so distracting and the students were very keen to get outside and see. All our students enjoyed playing in the garden and Skye, our school dog joined in with the fun.



Classroom News:

Our students continue to work hard engaging in their learning and acquiring new skills. One of the favorites this term was working on building their own websites

English: In English students studied a range of text types and writing techniques including newspaper articles, biographies and instructions. They have also explored characterizations, setting descriptions and using a setting to influence the mood of a piece of writing.

Maths: In maths a range of concepts have been covered including comparing fractions, converting improper fractions to mixed numbers, finding percentages, alongside perpendicular and parallel lines, types of triangles and constructing complex polygons.

Science: In Science this term students have looked at energy and electric circuits, comparing series and parallel circuits and measuring the current at different points and with more components. They applied their knowledge of electric circuits to create their own wire buzz games in DT. They all designed their own and their personalities are reflected in the designs they chose!

Geography: In Geography students have studied using a variety of map skills, including understanding gridlines, compass directions, scale and lines of longitude and latitude. In the second half term the focus was on learning more about earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanoes.

RE: In RE, students looked at two additional faiths, Islam and Sikhism, learning about the important aspects of these faiths. A school trip to the mosque in Cambridge provided an opportunity to see for themselves where and how Muslims practise their religion.

History: In history we have looked at the Norman Invasion and the Industrial Revolution— learning crucial facts, thinking about the lives of those affected and looking at some sources used by historians to interpret past events.

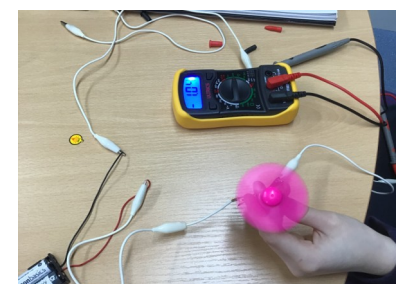
Art: In Art students used the work of artists Paul Klee, Claude Monet and Vincent van Gogh as starting points for their own colour mixing and painting, and worked on drawing with perspective, producing some effective one-point and two-point perspective drawings.

DT: In addition to working on their buzz wire projects our students have also practised their sewing skills. Some students learned embroidery skills, others cross stitched a design. A really focused activity that took a lot of concentration but was also calming for our students.

Computing: During the first half term students learnt more about networks, and how the internet works, alongside thinking a little about internet safety. This learning then allowed them to design and build their own websites which was enjoyed by all.

PHSE: Student wellbeing is an essential component of our provision at HTS. This term we have been looking at managing feelings, what we say and how this can impact on others alongside looking at how using the internet can impact on how we feel and how to make good choices.

PE: Students practised the football and basketball skills of dribbling, passing and shooting, and our indoor PE sessions this term were held at a trampoline park and Huntingdon Gym. All students had opportunities to practice new skills, which have included perseverance and determination.



Pastoral and other news

Education and therapeutic support has equal value at Hope Tree School and as a result our students benefit from the holistic approach being offered.

This term we have continued to visit the Alpaca Farm where the weather allowed, thankfully only missing one session due to the rain. Introducing new students into school is always a challenge because although our students are all very welcoming, it does take time to adjust.

During our Alpaca sessions this term we have been looking at how different groups come together, what behaviour is welcoming and what does behaviour look like when a group is not ready to be together. In addition to looking at the workings of groups our students have continued to gain confidence with animal handling with students having the chance to interact with different alpacas, with one or two being cheeky on occasion.

Portia, our visiting Speech and Language Therapist has been into school now and met our students. She is busy looking at ways in which receptive language difficulties may be impacting on our students' access to the curriculum. Our students continue to gain confidence with having visitors at school.

Sarah, our OT has begun looking at sensory assessments for those students who have not had access to them previously. The results from these assessments will inform the development of sensory friendly resources in the future.

Finally, as we continue to grow we will be welcoming additional staff members to school. A big thank you to Helen and Becky this term for your hard work and dedication to our students and next term we are looking forward to welcoming both Kirstie and Vicki to our team.

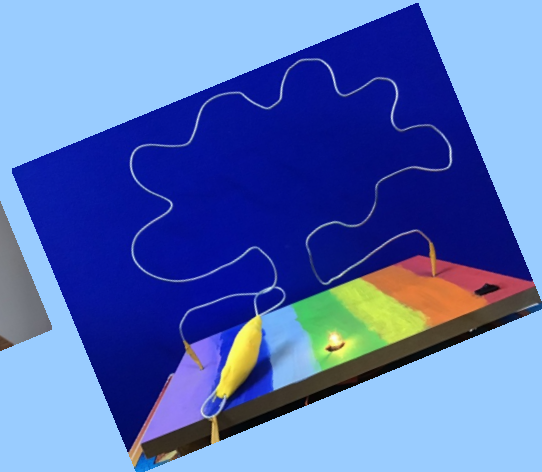
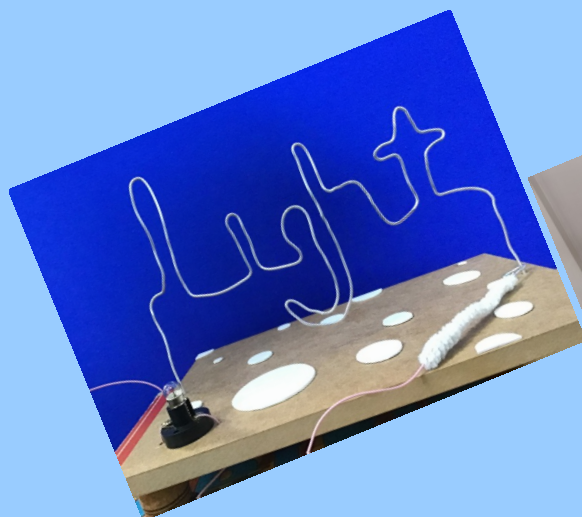
All students at HTS have the opportunity to be rewarded for demonstrating a range of life skills.

This term rewards are given in the form of gems of all different colours. There are silver, gold and diamond gems for special achievements.

Rewards are given for

- Kindness
- Perseverance
- Independence
- Resilience
- Trying new things
- Making good choices
- Flexibility

When each student has enough gems, they are allowed to spend them on items of their choice that they can use at school.



Skye's first time on a bus

