

# Governor Visit to Maple Class (KS1)

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2010

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My visit to Maple Class began with me observing the class. From just looking around the classroom it was obvious as to what subjects the children are currently learning. An inviting book display included numerous books on the invention of flying and the Wright brothers. An eye-catching wall display depicted photos of Leonardo da Vinci, and the whiteboard had a mind-map type diagram of questions again, regarding the Wright brothers. It was also clear from the whiteboard that the children are learning about research and how to extract information. Some notes on the board included terms such as *contents* and *glossary*.

The class began with a literacy session with the children sitting on the mat around a whiteboard. They were asked to recall some of their phonics learning, for example ‘*how many ways can you write the ‘ee’ sound?*’ This will followed by the introduction of the *e\_e* sound and split diagraphs i.e. *pet* and *Pete*. Throughout the whole session the pupils were attentive with many of them eagerly putting their hands up to answer the questions. Even when asked to spell trickier words such as *theme* and *extreme*, some pupils were confident enough to have a go at spelling them on the board in front of the class. It was fantastic to see the children so enthusiastic!

The literacy session was followed by some topic work on inventors and scientists and a short video was shown about the Wright brothers. Again the children were very attentive and were able to answer lots of questions afterwards. The video helped to illustrate that there are a number of ways to learn through different types of media. They had seen books and a cartoon on the Wright Brothers, and had now seen a film. This session ended with a fact finding task.

The four pupils that I spoke with from this class were Felix and Thea from Year 1 and Emily and Barnaby from Year 2. They were very excited to tell me that they are learning about Leonardo da Vinci and the Wright brothers. Barnaby said that “the Wright brothers invented an aeroplane... so did Leonardo da Vinci, but his didn’t fly!”

I asked if they knew anything about inventions beforehand, or about how things were made, but it was clear they hadn’t really thought about it. When asked *why* we should learn about inventions and science, they were much clearer; “because we want to be able to tell our children when we are older” said Felix. They all seemed to understand the importance of passing information on, which linked in well with a discussion later about books and research.

I asked what other reasons we might need to learn about inventions and Felix responded “because when we’re older, *we* might invent something.” They all understood the process of inventing; the idea, the design, the build and then the testing. They said they knew this process because “that was how Leonardo da Vinci did it”, and gave the water wheel as an example. I asked them what kind of inventions people would design in the future, which seemed to confuse them. When I suggested that someone may invent a machine that at the click of a button would transport us to the moon, they all laughed!

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Barnaby said that home he was learning about the inventor of the World Wide Web. I understand that the children have been set a homework task of researching an inventor or scientist of their own choice. They will then have to discuss their project with the teacher and pupils in a 'show and tell' session.

The children told me that they use many things to help them to learn at school, such as books, videos and computers. Emily said she liked using the computers best for learning, especially maths games. They said their teachers, TAs and parent helpers help them with their learning, "except when it's 'have a go' day". Emily and Thea said they like working with their friends because they could all help each other. They all said that family members help them with their learning when completing homework.

I asked the children how they show people what they had learnt, and they showed me their topic books. They all contained written work, photographs, pictures and maps, all about themselves, their homes, and their village and also work they had completed on the inventors. They showed off their books with pride and it was obvious that they had taken a great deal of care over their work.

When I asked how they knew they had done something right they were eager to explain the house point system. Emily explained that house points were gained from "doing something good and unexpected". Thea said she liked the system in Holly Class where pupils were rewarded "by being put on a star".

If they could change their learning in any way, the boys said they would like to do more ICT. I think the girls agreed, but they said their friends didn't always want to do ICT, during Golden Time especially. (I wondered if ICT at Golden Time is not as appealing for girls). Felix said he'd prefer more room to be able write on this Handy Homework sheet and Emily and Barnaby said they'd prefer to have lunch earlier as Maple and Holly Class are slower at eating than the older year groups!

Finally, I asked what the best things were about learning at Barnabas Oley School. Barnaby said learning about inventions, Emily said Show and Tell, and others said they enjoyed learning in Golden Time. Thea added that she really enjoyed the Snow Queen performance, and would like visitors to come to the school more often.

Many thanks to Miss Bush and the children for bearing with me on my first governor visit!

*Jane Hodges*  
(Link Governor - Key Stage 1)