

Bishopton Primary School and our links to Stratford-upon-Avon



Bishopton Primary School is surrounded by a wealth of cultural and historical sites and, as a school, we seek to utilise this to expand and enrich our curriculum. As a school we realise the importance of studying the local community and area, thus enabling our pupils to get a sense of where they are. With this in mind, we have ensured that studies of the local area is dovetailed into our curriculum throughout the year.

Our Reception class throughout the year take part in wellie walks around the local school grounds and the local area. This focusses children on a range on observation and investigative tasks, enabling them to gain an understanding of where they live. It takes into account the changing seasons, incorporating all aspects of the curriculum, not just the core subjects. In the summer term, the reception class has a topic on the local area, and is involved in the whole school Shakespeare topic. During this, children get the opportunity to explore the river, local landmarks, and building linked to Shakespeare as well as exploring one of his plays.

Key Stage 1 use their topic 'Land Ahoy' to investigate the River Avon, its banks and how it has been used in the past and present. We will look at the different boats and activities that taken place around the river and surrounding area,

In their second topic 'Scented Garden,' Key Stage 1 will learn about Shakespeare's houses through a focus on the gardens at the properties. We visit New Place and learn about the plants that were significant to Shakespeare. We go on to learn about the meaning that plants had in Shakespeare's writing e.g. 'rosemary for remembrance', and the role this still plays in Shakespeare's Birthday celebrations.

We also visit Lifeways Community Garden, Albany Rd to see a selection of allotments and community gardening projects. We have already forged links with this, through our Gardening Club visits.

Lower Key Stage 2 start their exciting new local topic "Urban Pioneers", by visiting Stratford-upon-Avon town to view and sketch different buildings and plot our route. Pupils will investigate urban art including statues, sculptures and murals, taking photographs from different angles. Using these, children will design leaflets aimed at younger visitors. From a historical perspective, Pupils examine and research the history of specific buildings and examples of historical and commemorative statues in Stratford. Visitors to school will share their expert knowledge with us. This is an ideal opportunity to find out about famous significant people from our town, for example William Shakespeare.

Year 5's topic, 'Peasants, princes and pestilence', focuses primarily on the Black Death but also on the roles of knights and castles in the 14th century. With this in mind, we organised an 'Engage' activity where pupils visited Warwick Castle and learnt about the fortification of the area in addition to what life was like during that time. We will be using this visit to develop pupils' learning in both English, topic work and art.

Furthermore, our final topic of the year is 'Time Traveller.' During this topic, will be looking extensively at how Stratford-upon-Avon has changed over the past few hundred years both with regards to events that have occurred and is geographical development. Again, we plan to visit the local area with the intention of linking our studies to art, English and topic as part of larger scale project.

With, Stratford-upon-Avon being famous for the works of Shakespeare, in the final term the class will be studying one of his texts. This text will be embedded into all of the English work for the term and will focus on using drama to develop pupils' writing. In addition, the class will take part in the whole school re-enactment of the play as part of an RSC program.

During the academic year, the pupils in year 6 are closely involved with activities at the Royal Shakespeare Company and visit the theatre regularly. We make use of the RSC's First Encounters linked to the current play and Year 6 have various outings planned to The Swan theatre to watch productions. The final part of the summer term focuses on a specific Shakespeare text where they also get the opportunity to learn about their town and the influence it had on Shakespeare and his writing.

Stratford is also used for various enrichment activities over the year such as Bell Boating on The River Avon, where pupils learn how to stay safe by water, its destination, key features of the river (locks and weirs) and various other facts relating to both the history and the geography of The River Avon. As well as discussions about the architecture of the buildings, flood plains and how the town benefits from having such a physical feature.

At the end of the school year, Year 6 participate in a Stratford-upon-Avon town quiz where they are given questions relating to various features of the town. These are completed in small groups and help with their understanding and knowledge of the local area.