

Elementary News

October 2020

The Great Lessons

“Let us give the child a vision of the whole universe ... for all things are part of the universe, and are connected with each other to form one whole unity.” Maria Montessori

Since Montessori believed that everything in the universe is connected, she believed that we must show elementary children the whole universe because no part of it can be explained without knowledge of the whole. Presenting the universe to the child is no small task! We do this through five “great stories” or “great lessons”. These are:

- The Story of the Universe
- The Story of Life
- The Story of Humans
- The Story of Maths
- The Story of Writing

Together these lessons allow the child to explore the creation of the universe, the whole of evolution and the evolution of human ideas. It provides a framework for our elementary curriculum, helping the children make sense of their learning as they can relate it back to the bigger picture to see how everything is connected.

The same lessons are explored each year, allowing children to consolidate their learning and dive deeper into the topics or to explore different aspects when they revisit the lessons. The subject matter is so vast that there is always something new we can learn!

Exploring the Universe

We started term with The Story of the Universe. The children were interested in the planets, so we followed this interest and continued to explore it across all curricular areas.



Listening to the story of the universe. After popping a balloon filled with confetti stars to help us imagine the big bang, we placed the stars in a bowl of water and watched them drift together to form galaxies.

We created our own mini books, learning how to use the contents and index of non-fiction books and how to find relevant information to add to our books.



We managed to make a book about each planet! We hung them under the poster the group made with Julie.

The whole elementary team works together to support the children to explore the same concepts across different contexts.

Forest School

The open space at forest school enabled us to explore the scale of our solar system. We created a sun from fallen leaves and tied some cord at the centre of our sun.

We stretched out the cord and marked where each planet would lie. Mercury is 46,000,000km from the sun so we marked it at 46cm. Using the same scale that meant that we had to stretch out 73.7m of cord before we reached Pluto!...and we did!



Creative Learning with Julie

On Monday and Thursday afternoons we have carved out a space for self-expression, exploration of creativity, and observation of nature. Creative Learning requires a metacognitive approach and presents lots of opportunities for problem solving. The work we do builds resilience, increases confidence and encourages empathy, as we form deeper connections to ourselves, each other, and our environment. Keeping the focus on process rather than product frees us up to embrace the transformations that are possible when you engage freely in creative activity.

This half term, we have been working on the following: -

- Supporting the children's learning on The First Great Lesson
- Introducing the children to materials and art techniques through invitations to create
- Exploring nature, natural materials and natural spaces, and reinforcing the importance of sustainability in our practice

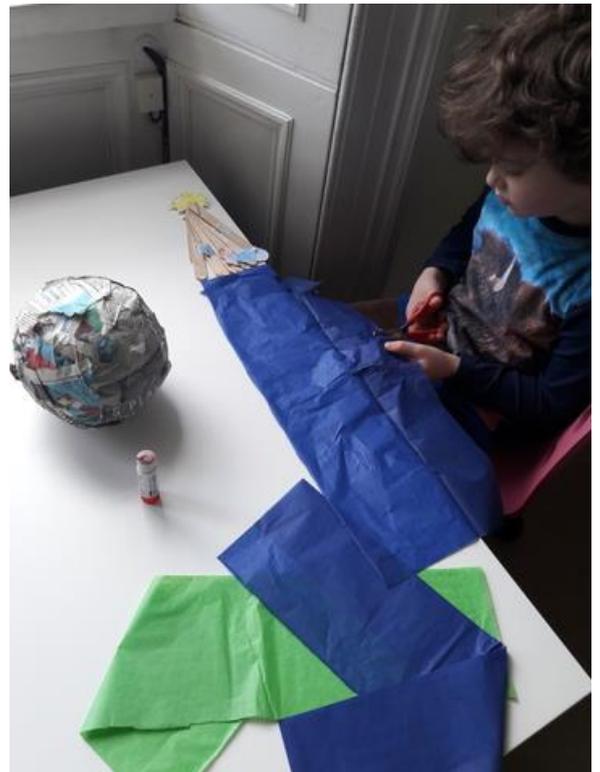
Our projects have been guided by the children's interest in the solar system. These projects included: -

- Cosmos mandalas (clay)
- The creation of a 3D model of the solar system (sculpture)
- Solar system wall posters demonstrating the order and relative size, colour and features of the planets (ink marbling)
- Storyboarding - we used a short scene from Mary Poppins to break down the process of creating a storyboard before embarking on our own film making project (drawing)
- Filmmaking - the children are in the process of making their own short film using their own knowledge of the solar system (performance skills). This is ongoing work, and we will return to use and develop these skills again and again.



Julie will continue to work closely with Anna to reinforce and grow the children's learning in the Montessori classroom. We hope the children have enjoyed their first half term of Creative Learning. Julie certainly has enjoyed working with them.

Spanish with Naizary



The children have been learning about colours in Spanish by making pinatas and colouring images of our solar system. The group chose to decorate their pinatas like planet Earth. We also found out the names of the planets in Spanish and created a labelled model to help us remember them.