

Young Arts 2017

Cheryl Kellaway

Welwyn Garden Decorative and Fine Arts Society has made an exciting start to 2017. In 2016 in co-operation with Peartree Primary School we made plans to sponsor a whole school mosaic project.

On the 20th February our mosaic artist Jane Visick came to the school for a mosaic assembly. She showed the children examples of mosaics she had made at other schools. Jane then explained the process, how the tiny tiles would be placed on a mesh surface, under which was the prepared design.

The enthusiasm in the school hall was infectious and there were many good questions, which showed how engaged the children were in the project. They had been asked to draw and sketch ideas for the mosaic, based on the school's values. Co-operation, honesty, ambition, perseverance, friendship and respect. The art co-ordinator Pooja Chandarana, Jane and I had decided on a circular design, with the Peartree School motif in the centre and each of the mosaic panels, round the central circle.

Jane took away the designs to plan and prepare the boards ready for our project start on Tuesday 7th March.

I arrived at Peartree on Tuesday morning at 9.15 to be greeted by an exciting scene, in the school hall tables had been set up, the mosaic panels were in place one on each table and there were many bags of brightly coloured glass

squares in evidence, plus glue pots and brushes. As I learnt to my cost, little children love to wave gluey brushes around in the air, landing on my clothes on occasion!

All the adults involved in the project considered it essential that every child in the school had the exciting experience of contributing to the mosaic, so once it was in place in the school entrance they would feel a sense of ownership. It was evident they already felt pride and excitement. The atmosphere in the hall all day was wonderful, as the mosaics took shape and there was a constant stream of visitors, adults and children, coming to look at the progress we were making.

The year six children were given the task of making the central Peartree Motif. At the base of the tree Jane had incorporated our name, "Welwyn Garden Decorative and Fine Arts Society" in small letters one on each mosaic tile. The children came in during the day in relays and by the end of the day good progress had been made.

Day two began, and we begun filling in the background, we were hoping that all the children would have a second turn, and it was fascinating to listen to them as they came back in and saw how their panel had grown since the last visit. There were comments like "I did that bit" or " I filled in the dress".

The youngest children also did well, with a degree of supervision from the adults to ensure that the tiles actually made it onto the boards. By lunchtime on the second day the mosaic designs were finished and ready for Jane to prepare for the installation the following Monday.

On Monday 13th March, the photographer from The Welwyn Hatfield Times arrived to take photos of the finished mosaic, which Jane had installed in the porch leading into the main entrance to the school. It really looked splendid, the sun was shining and the tiles sparkled and shone.

Pooja had selected one child from each class and as Jane pulled away the covering sheet there were delighted exclamations! In fact the photographer had to wait while the group pointed to “their” tiles. After the photos there was an assembly, Jane and I were thanked and we each received a bunch of flowers. It was a lovely surprise and a super end to our project.

I would like to thank NADFAS House and the Beds and Herts Area for their help in funding this event.

Finally an email from Pooja.

Hi

I just wanted to say thank you to both of you. It looks amazing and so many parents have commented on it already saying how fantastic it looks!

It's been a pleasure working with the both of you.

Pooja