

A project inspired by **The Italian Renaissance** by Years 5 and 6

Overview

This term in Upper Key Stage 2 the children undertook a History, Art and Geography based project. A central display of Italian produce was assembled in the classroom, to get the children recognising familiar products linked to Italy, but also to raise questions about the unfamiliar. World famous Italian brands, international football teams and samples of food did the trick and 'hooked' the children in to wanting to find out more about this European country.

An integral part of the Geography curriculum is for the children to study the physical qualities of a European country (climate, rivers, mountains etc.) and begin to understand the human geography of an area (economics, land use, settlement etc.) Using maps and atlases the children were able to study the geographical location of Italy- one of the most recognisable countries in Europe and its distance from the UK. Key cities and regions were plotted on a map, as well as the important physical features: The Alps, The Dolomites and The Apennine mountain ranges were all discussed and evaluated; the invaluable River Po and the agriculture of the Po Valley were investigated and key volcanoes such as Mount Etna and Vesuvius provided the children with moments of awe and wonder. Similarities and differences with our home region were interwoven within discussions.

The life and work of famous Italian artists such as Michelangelo, Raphael and Donatello were observed, with greater emphasis on the ultimate Renaissance man, Leonardo Da Vinci. The children learnt about the quest of Humanism and how artists, scientists and literary people sought to improve their lives and lifestyles. Taking inspiration from Da Vinci they studied their hands, eyes, ears and mouths with close observational studies- the iPads were used to capture them in different positions.

The children formed a company called 'Pasta Present Pioneers' and they produced documents that celebrated brand Italy- Ferrari, Gucci, AC Milan, The Pope, ice cream, pasta etc. aspects of Italy that resonated with them. Reading 'Falcon in the Glass' by Susan Fletcher enabled them to travel back in time to The Renaissance, where they learnt about the famous artists and came across Venetian glass on the island of Murano- a 'glassworks' studio and exhibition was set up in class. They received a request from the National Gallery in London who wanted artwork inspired from this era for their website. This work is ongoing and will be exhibited shortly. A visit to a hot glass studio is being arranged, as a local artist is skilled in the craft of Venetian glass blowing.

Facilitator Reflection

This project has been enlightening. The children were engaged from the start. Multiple curriculum objectives have been delivered through an inspirational time in human achievements that has allowed the children to appreciate the Tudor era from the perspective of another country.

Pupil Reflections

I enjoyed making the Murano glass- I used junk modelling materials from home.
I really liked learning about Leonardo da Vinci; he is an inspiration to all artists.
I enjoyed doing my research project with my friend.

