

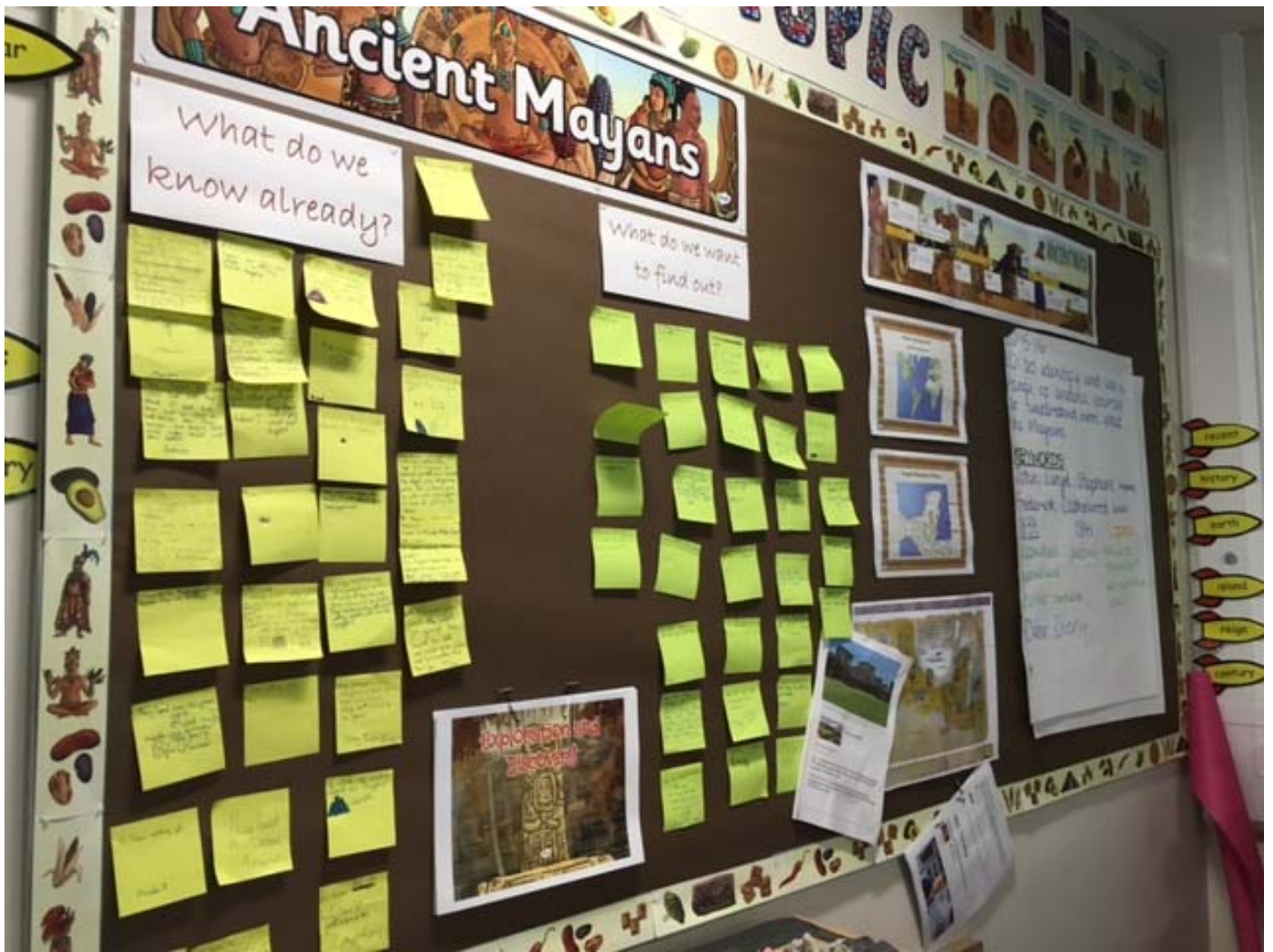
Garden Field Primary visit – CNN 13/06/2016

Garden Fields is an Ofsted Good with Outstanding Features mixed Primary school that is in the process of moving from a two form to a three form entry in response to budget cuts. They have been recently refurbished in some areas and had some of the loveliest facilities I have seen in schools, not because of the money spent on them, but in the way they used the space. I was thoroughly impressed by the place and thought there were masses of ideas and examples we could translate in to the Secondary classroom.



Working Walls

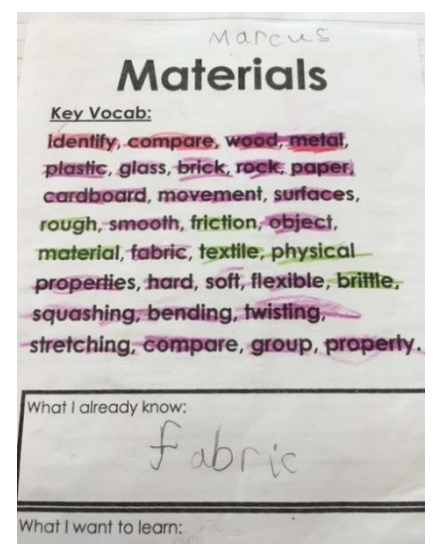
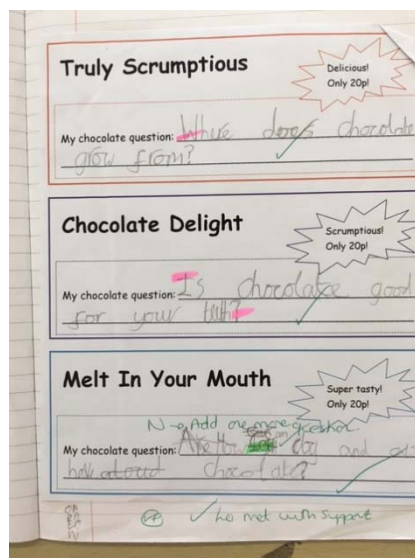
All classrooms use displays in a far more fluid way than seen in Secondary. They have 'Working Walls' in every subject area, especially Literacy and Numeracy, where teachers will pin up exemplar work, write on large sheets of paper with prompt ideas, pin NOW task-type questions for extension and have students add their own ideas with post-it notes. I am keen to try this out in Science and see how displays can be made more useful and be better incorporated into the lessons, rather than acting just as decoration.



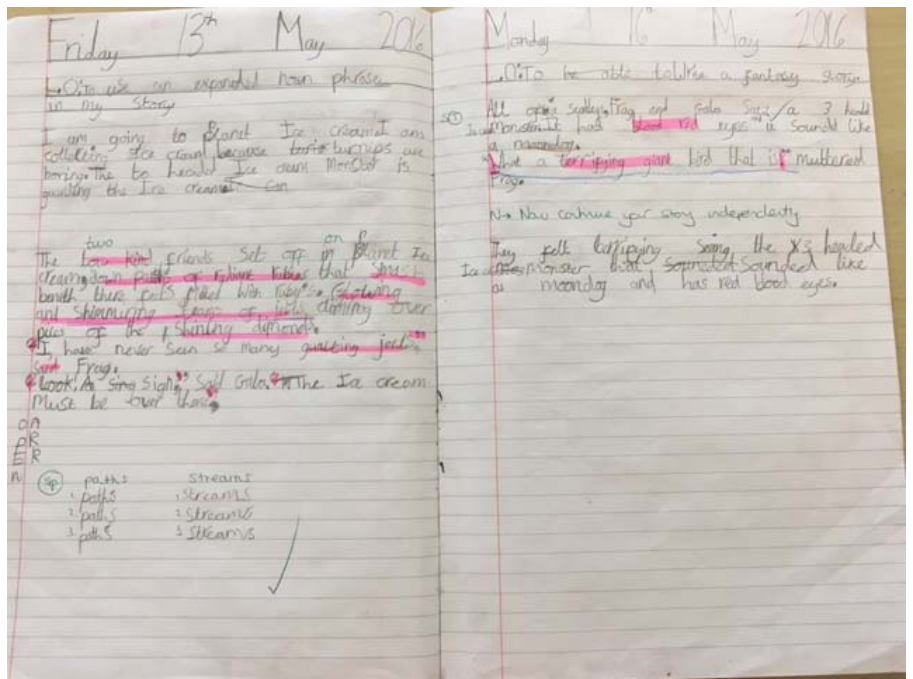
Walking into a classroom in Primary is something of a visual assault with every wall covered in coloured paper, labels, student work etc. The EYF area was packed with all sorts of things hanging from ceilings, stuck to walls etc and, where there is an obvious age difference between their students and ours, I would like to see students coming in to Science classrooms full of things to look at and use to further learning.

Marking

Students work is marked with comments and NOW tasks (they call these 'Next Step' tasks) with any incorrect areas highlighted in pink and good things highlighted in green. They use this same concept for



Intro sheets to topics – a list of new vocab is included with students colouring words they recognise and understand in pink and those they do not know in green ('green for growth'). I quite liked this as it implies progress and pushing yourself into unknown areas is positive. The other thing that stood out for me was the literacy marking – subject areas



only correct spelling relevant to their own content. The argument is that students spend so much time on literacy now that the focus of marking in subject areas should be the content itself, something I thought was really interesting and as this does not always get fully examined during major book looks.

Placemats

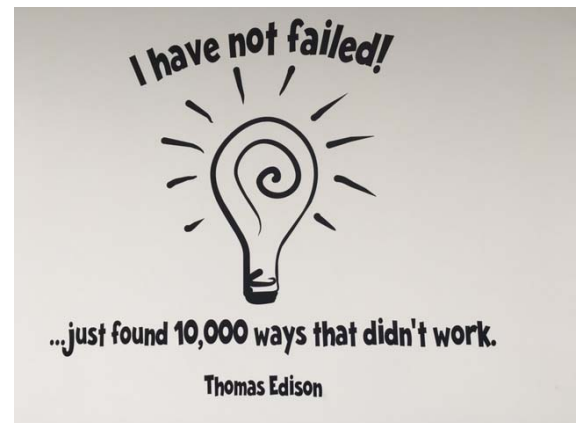
Student desks in classrooms had prompt cards / small placemats stuck to the desk. Where I would fear graffiti of these in Secondary, this is an idea I have been toying with this year for Science, particularly to emphasise the maths elements (formulae in Physics, working out averages etc) by sticking them to the desks. They went a step further in one class I visited by differentiating tables



and maintaining a fluid seating plan, with the teacher spending time sat at a lower ability desk that had more prompts stuck to it for support.

Use of wall space and corridors

Every conceivable inch of wall space was used to further students' learning at Garden Fields. I particularly liked the use of murals in the corridors that were relevant to the students. One wall was a large painting of the UK and something I thought would like beautifully with our need to focus on British Values, another included a painted brick wall that Year 6 leavers were allowed to sign on their departure. I am keen to look at what more we can do with the corridor space in Science and enhance the Space corridor a bit more to make better use of the theme out there already. Something else that I loved was the use of large sticker quotes on the walls, something I definitely want to use in Science to provoke thought and reflection. I have investigated these already and they can be purchased online for as little as £15.



Pitch

My overwhelming feeling is that Primary teaching is not respected enough by Secondary teachers and we are not necessarily acknowledging the volume and depth of content children have already covered when they get to us in Year 7. I think we need to pitch higher across the board and forge more links with subject specialists in Primary schools to better bridge the gap. I also felt upon leaving that Year 7 experience a sudden increase in freedom and that, between this and



an incorrect pitch in some areas, might well account for some of the behavioural issues this year group experience.

Some of the work I saw from Year 6, though granted from their higher ability students, was of a level seen at GCSE. One class have completed an extensive project on the heart that included detail I would not normally see or be expected to deliver until Year 11, and even then, only to our triple students.

