



Thursday 23rd March 2026

Dinglewell Science Festival

This morning, the Dinglewell Infant School hall was filled with a buzz greater than any I have experienced since September (and I don't just mean Class 7's pollination stand). Today was the annual Dinglewell Infant School Science Festival and, despite hearing about and seeing photographs from previous festivals, I was not prepared for just how outstanding this event would be in all its glory.

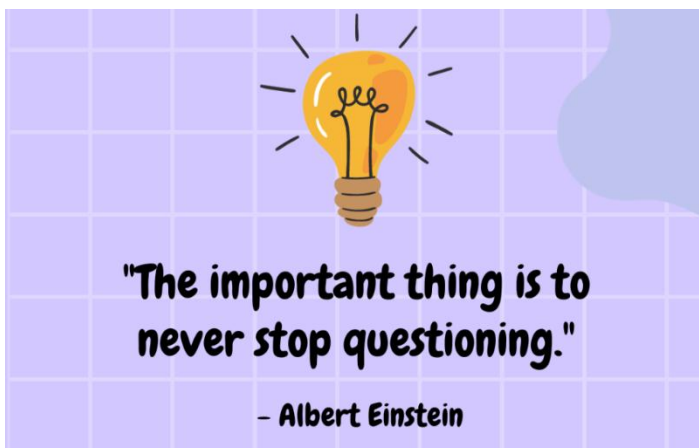
Dotted around the hall were ten stations, each with its own team of scientific experts and each covering a different area of science. Scientific enquiry was high on the agenda, with every table offering questions, facts, books, and an interactive activity. At each station, the children presented their question, shared their research, and guided visitors to make their own predictions. I was particularly impressed with the considered and mature instruction from the Class 8 children as they helped me make my very own paper aeroplane (which, unfortunately, didn't live up to my expectations in the test).

I have been so impressed with the level of knowledge the children demonstrated and could recall unprompted. The scientific language they used exceeded even my own very high expectations. I am, of course, referring in part to the EYFS children, who confidently explained that the car travelled faster down the steeper slope due to "higher levels of stored energy".

Each year, the British Science Association produces supportive packs for schools, and each year there is a carefully considered theme. This year's theme was *Curiosity*, which aligns perfectly with our focus on developing the children's scientific enquiry skills. You may remember from an earlier newsletter that last term, Mrs Bews led a staff meeting to support teachers in making the most of enquiry-based learning and encouraging children to ask more and more questions. Today was a perfect example of all that coming together, with the children not only answering our questions but posing some of their own. For example, at the Class 9 table I was invited to consider whether my heart rate would change following a little light exercise. I made my prediction, guided by the Class 9 experts, and—lo and behold—after a quick sprint on the spot, my heart rate had raced up!

In no particular order, here are some of today's table highlights:

- **Class 7** taught me about pollination, challenging me to work as a bee to transfer beads from one flower to another. I was particularly impressed with the teamwork demonstrated as we attempted to pollinate as efficiently as possible. They also thoroughly enjoyed telling me that the delicious honey poured onto my porridge each day had, in fact, come from a bee's bottom!
- In an equally unpleasant vein, **Class 4** invited me to use a pipette to drip 'snot' onto different materials to find out which one was the most absorbent. Well, I certainly wouldn't want a tin-foil tissue. Thanks, Class 4!
- **Class 5** brought storytelling to life by flinging gingerbread men across the river. During my time at the table, very few gingerbread men became soggy, and Class 5 explained in great detail how their catapult and lever worked.
- **Class 1** taught us all about stored energy as they rolled cars and eggs down a ramp, noting the different distances travelled. They also explained the importance of keeping the test fair and ensuring that the vehicles were *let go* and not *pushed*. Some of the children also mentioned gravity as "a force that pulls



things to the ground”, and at that point I was directed to the **Class 2** table to see whether my toast would land butter-side up. I was particularly impressed with Class 2’s recording techniques, which highlighted the impact of increasing the height of the drop. Again, I was left questioning my breakfast choices.

- At the **Class 9** stand, I was given a detailed description of the heart chambers and the role the heart plays in sharing oxygen with the body.
- When I visited **Class 6**, I was challenged to use tin foil to create a sturdy boat and guided by the children to raise the sides so that the weight was distributed evenly. They told me, “It’s just like fractions, Mrs Southgate!”
- **Class 3** took centre stage in the middle of the room with their jet-propulsion investigation. We were challenged to find out which resources made the best rocket. Was it the big bottle with the small cone, or the small bottle with the big cone? One child recommended the larger bottle with the larger cone hat and, when I asked why, he simply replied that he had been “observing carefully”, and that’s what he had seen.

You will see a number of photographs accompanying this report, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Dinglewell Junior School team for providing additional expertise, a different level of challenge, and for supporting our young scientists. A huge thank you to the parent volunteers who braved the raucous school hall (I think some of them went home with cotton wool from Class 4’s table still in their ears). And finally, an enormous thank you to the children and staff for their creativity, enthusiasm, and curiosity. A special mention goes to Mrs Bews, who has been planning, resourcing, supporting, guiding, and preparing for this event for weeks. As the previous Science Lead for many years at my former school, I can honestly say that I have never seen a school-run Science Festival as engaging, purposeful, and truly inspiring.