

Case Study 4 - Ysgol Gymraeg Cwmnedd School

We chose Richard Parks as our starting point for a programme of work on Welsh Heroes.

The children learnt about Richard's 737 Challenge, which led to work in practically all areas of the curriculum. Our main focus was exploration and mountaineering, so there were suitable opportunities to study the countries that Richard visited for his challenge and the location of these countries in the seven continents of the world.

This led to work in maths, when the children compared the differing heights of the mountain peaks he climbed, in history where we looked at exploration in the past, in science where we discussed changing states and the use of materials and in art where the children were able to use their imagination extensively.

The development of children's literacy skills is embedded in the curriculum, and in every aspect of their work, and our project on Richard Parks afforded genuine opportunities to foster those skills in Welsh and in English, over and above our systematic approach.

Although the children had plenty of questions which arose on the day - they were, as expected, very interested to hear about his frostbite! They had thought carefully about what they wanted to know about Richard, and especially about the 737 Challenge and they had prepared so that nothing important was left out.

We talked also about the ways in which we treat visitors to our school, and the ways in which we greet them, and thank them for their contribution, and about taking turns and allowing others to ask their questions. After the visit we discussed ways of responding, and decided on a magazine to relate what had happened. This led to discussion and agreement on the differing kinds of writing required for different purposes.

Before the visit, the children had been working on a short video of Richard's challenge. They had collated pictures of the peaks and background pictures representing the 7 continents and then superimposed a picture of Richard at each stage of his journey, as well as scripting Richard's thoughts. We showed this to Richard on the day, and he commented that it was one of the funniest things he had seen!

All in all, the project was an immense success. We all enjoyed meeting Richard, and his energy and drive was inspirational.

Richard's visit to Ysgol Gymraeg Cwmnedd is an occasion that the children will carry with them always. He was inspirational - as a person and in the story that he told. I have rarely, if ever, seen children so engaged.

Dewi Owen, Ysgol Gymraeg Cwmnedd.