

● **henshaws**

**specialist  
college**

*beyond expectations*



# **Jessica's story**

**virtual learning  
case study**

# Jessica's home learning journey

## Supporting students at home through Covid-19

Jessica is a student on the Independence programme at Henshaws Specialist College. She is a first year student who would normally attend college five days a week, staying at college for two nights a week in a residential placement also.

The national lockdown due to Covid-19 meant that, like many of our students, Jessica stayed at home from mid-March until the end of the academic year.

It's not always been easy, as understandably Jessica has at times struggled to get motivated with learning from home. However she has made some great achievements, with support from college staff who have adapted sessions to deliver them virtually.

This is her home learning journey.



# jessica's routine

**Like many of us, getting in to a good routine during lockdown was really helpful to Jessica and gave her lots of opportunities to practice her independence.**

Jessica quickly slotted into a new 'normal' with the use of a visual timetable in her bedroom which helped her stick to her routine.

She watched lots of films and tv and wrote many movie related lists. She watched and imitated various Makaton signing DVDs such as Signing Hands Pop DVD. She liked to act out her favourite scenes from what she watched. She also spent many hours 'organising' her things.

At first Jessica was quite reluctant to get on with her independent educational work. However her family helped to motivate her by using her favourite characters in activities like word searches, which made her more willing to complete the work.

She wrote cards to friends and was able to talk about 'who' she wanted to send them to 'what' she had to do (address envelope, stamp etc) and 'where' they live. Her parents built these types of questions into everyday life to help Jessica with her learning.

Jessica enjoyed creating her own newsletter, taking lots of photos when she was doing things as she likes to look at herself and they help motivate her. She completed a few 'project style' topics such as a Covid-19 time Capsule; VE Day; the '30 days wild' project from The Wildlife Trust and Empathy Day.

Jessica showed her independence skills at lunchtimes, helping get lunch ready for herself. She made cups of tea for her dad independently and offered to make them of her own accord. In the afternoon she often went out for a walk or a bike ride or to play a bit of basketball or table tennis. She occasionally helped to prepare dinner, laying the table and getting drinks. When she had a bath or shower she followed the visual timetables for washing and drying independently.

She attended a few Zoom sessions with friends and family - doing quizzes, playing bingo, even a pamper party. She also used WhatsApp to talk to her friends with some help from her family using her mobile phone.

# cooking

Jessica kept herself busy at home during the coronavirus pandemic by completing lots of fantastic work to meet her cognition and learning outcomes.

Jessica used her numeracy skills in the kitchen to make tasty cheese biscuits and a lovely lemon drizzle cake. She carefully followed the method set by the recipes and weighed out the ingredients carefully adding up the quantities, and timed the bake time.



## Have a go at making your own easy cheese biscuits:

### Ingredients:

120g plain flour  
120g butter (softened)/margarine  
120g grated mature cheddar cheese

### Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 170C/fan 150C/gas 5.
2. Mix all the ingredients together in a mixing bowl using your hands until a dough is formed.
3. Roll out the dough to a thickness of 5mm.
4. Use a cutter to cut out the biscuits.
5. Place the biscuits onto 2 floured baking trays and bake in the oven for 10-15 minutes or until golden and crispy.



# writing

To complete her writing work Jessica filled in lots of forms for a Covid-19 time capsule. She had to write her name, sections all about her favourite things and how she has been spending her time during the lockdown. She also completed lots of word searches and writing worksheets.

Did you know? While boosting your brain, problem-solving skills and spelling, doing word searches helps further improve language learning. It's a great way for people of all learning abilities to learn words and increase vocabulary.

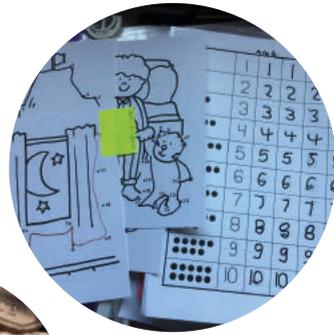


...was The Great Fire of London.  
 ...was a big fire that that started  
 It was a fire that started  
 in a bakery on Pudding Lane,  
 in a bakery on Pudding Lane,  
 devastating the City of London.  
 devastating the City of London.  
 devastating the City of London.

2. When did it happen?  
 Sunday, 2 September to  
 Sunday, 6 September 1666

# maths & science

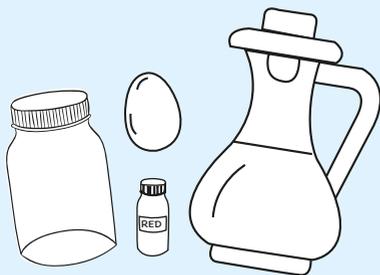
To achieve her money counting maths tasks Jessica used print out calculation sheets with images of coins to choose which ones would be needed to create certain amounts. The use of worksheets also helped Jessica to practice writing numbers and sequencing work with dot-to-dot art work.



Jessica's science task was a naked egg experiment. The aim of the experiment was to remove the egg from its shell. This involved covering the egg in vinegar and keeping it in a jar where it would gradually lose its shell over a period of 5 days!



## Here's how to make your own naked eggs:



### Ingredients you'll need:

1 raw egg, 1 jar with lid, vinegar, food colouring

### Method:

Place the egg carefully in the jar, fill the jar with vinegar, be sure to fully cover the egg. Put in a few drops of your favourite colour. Wait for a few days until the shell has completely broken down. Take the egg out of the jar and give it a little wash.

Way-hey! now you have your very own naked egg!

## Help your student learn to explore by asking questions to spark curiosity!

What does the egg feel like? What colour is it? Is it hard or soft? Does it feel squishy? What does it smell like? What does it look like? All of these questions encourage exploration and hands-on learning. Have them use their senses to observe!

# mindfulness

Jessica took part in some mindfulness art therapy sessions while she was at home. She had her favourite music playing in the background, and the gentle sound of rain outside. She used paints to create an abstract piece of artwork which looks fantastic!

## The benefits of art and mindfulness are:

- Improved mental and physical wellbeing
- Greater sense of satisfaction
- Outlet to express your emotions
- Improved concentration
- Greater self control
- Opportunity to get creative



## Ways to practice mindfulness art:

Mindfulness can be active, noisy, messy, or quiet. It works best when we incorporate all of a student's senses and really make it a whole body experience for them, which is why art can be a great way to practice mindfulness.

**Remember, you can be as creative as you want!**

### Here are some ideas of how you can practice mindfulness:

- Collect leaves and use paints or marker pens to create patterns on the leaf
- Use any form of mark making tool (paints/pencils/pens collage/chalk) and let the child just be creative and express themselves artistically
- Practice breathing exercises and ask the child to draw a line as they breathe in and out, changing direction of the pen with each breath.

# horticulture

Working outside was also a real benefit to Jessica while homeschooling. She was able to learn about plants and gardening while getting some fresh air. Some of the things she has learnt include the life cycle of plants, while also taking part in the forest schools 'go wild' project.

Jessica also listened to birdsong when out in the garden, and discussed which bird she thought was making the sound. Once she got back inside she talked about what bird she would be and decided on a fabulous flamingo!

Working outside is a great way of learning in a different environment and many students find it much more engaging on a sensory level, plus they get to be very hands on.



# speech and language

Jessica has been taking part in online Speech and Language Therapy sessions with two other students. At first Jessica was reluctant to participate in the sessions but with encouragement from her mum and the SALT session leaders she took part.

Firstly she concentrated on answering 'wh' questions, such as 'who, what, where, when, what happened and why'. Jessica managed to recall her targets with support and participated with a turn taking activity with the other students, listening and asking or answering questions.

Jessica also benefited from the use of Makaton signing prompts to retrieve answers and she actively used Makaton signs herself during the session to support her verbal communication skills. She also took part in a narrative board game and was able to answer 'who' questions related to herself with some support.

## Jessica's Newsletter:

Jessica has enjoyed collating her news each week for her newsletter and sharing what she has been up to with others. It is a very good way for her to practice her 'who' 'what' 'when' 'where' questions and answers. It's also a nice way for staff to see what she has been doing and to keep up with her homeschool learning progress.

