



Royal  
Astronomical  
Society

## **The 2023 Primary Education Award is awarded to Inga Helmecke**

Ms Inga Helmecke has developed a unique programme of study to teach Year 6 students about diversity across the history of astronomy. In their independent study, the children researched an historical astronomical figure or theme to present to their classmates. While attaining independent study and communication skills, the children also developed their own curiosity and employed judgment in what they learnt.

Alongside well-known astronomers from Brahe to Hubble, the students could study Caroline Herschel, Margaret Lindsay Huggins, Maria Mitchell and space-related engineers Mary Ross and Mae Jemison – the latter bridging the important connection between astronomy, technology and engineering.

The themes covered observations and the meaning of astronomy to Sumerians, Egyptians, Ancient Chinese, the Dogon from Mali, Aboriginal Australians, Mayans, and in Islam. Diversity of both gender and race in astronomy are seldom highlighted in this way, even at university level. This course will make a lasting impact on these children from whatever perspective they related to the most: astronomy, historical concepts or diversity. This innovative approach, with diversity at its core, at a stage in primary education when seeds of career decisions are being made, thoroughly deserves to be recognised.

For these reasons, Ms Inga Helmecke is awarded the RAS Primary Education Award, 2023.