



Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we start another busy term at Merridale, I wanted to write to share and celebrate with you some of the exciting learning that went on last term as well as some key information for the term ahead.

Spring Term Achievements



Well done to our Spring Term prize winners. These children impressed school staff throughout the term with their efforts and achievements. We are so proud of your hard work!

Online Payments

You will be aware that we have now moved over to the SimsPay system - this system is used to enable families to pay for school meals, milk, trips and visits as well as other items as necessary. School will no longer be taking cash payments except for after school clubs and some fund raising initiatives. Please support us in this by making payments online. If you need any support with this, please see Mrs Hitch in the office.

Wolves Foundation Feed Our Pack

Once again, we are incredibly grateful to the Wolves Foundation Feed our Pack campaign for their half term food donations. We were able to provide 30 food parcels to support Merridale families over half term.



Please remember, if you require any food support at any time, we also have our Community Larder at school and can provide support on request in the strictest confidence.

Nursery

Nursery parents and carers: please remember that Nursery closes for the Summer holidays at 3.15pm on Friday 15th July.

Attendance Update Texts

At the end of this week, parents and carers will receive a text from school with your child/ children’s current attendance percentage for the school year so far.

At Merridale, we have high expectations for school attendance - we aim for the national target of 96% attendance for all our pupils.

When children attend school consistently, they are more likely to do well in their work but also build strong relationships and feel connected with the school community.

We know that, sometimes, children cannot attend school. If they are unwell, please make sure you contact the school on the morning of the first day of absence. You might be asked to provide evidence of GP appointments, especially if your child’s attendance is lower than expected. School has a duty of care to ensure that all children are safe and in school as much as possible. This means that, where attendance is a concern, you might receive a visit from our Education Welfare Officer to explore the reasons for the absence and offer support and advice.

If you are worried about your child’s attendance, please contact school —we know that all circumstances are different and we are keen to support our families as much as possible to ensure children are at school on time, everyday.

Charity Support

Last term we told you about the School Council’s initiative to identify a local charity for the school to support and raise money for. After much discussion and research, the School Council led classes on a vote and children decided that they would like to raise funds to support **Compton Care**. Compton Care support families living with incurable conditions and they are based not far from Merridale. You can find out more about their work here:

[Compton Care](#) | [Palliative Care](#) | [Charity](#) | [Wolverhampton](#)

I am sure you can see the amazing work this charity does for families in Wolverhampton and will join us in raising money to support their work.



After School Clubs—Summer term

Children will be given their letters today which allow them to join an after school club for the summer term. Clubs begin WB 9th May and the last week for clubs is WB 4th July. Places are allocated on a first come, first served basis with payment securing your child’s place.



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Milk Payments—Summer term

Milk money for the Summer term is £14.56 per child (if you pay for milk for your child). Please pay this no later than Friday 13th May via SimsPay.



Dinner Money

Dinner money is £2.30 per day (£11.50 per week). Please can dinner money be sent into school at the start of each week via SimsPay.

Some parents and carers in receipt of income support and Working Family Tax Credits are entitled to free school meals and milk. Please ask at the school office for more information.

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are eligible to receive a free school meal everyday under the Universal Infant Free School Meals funding.

Parking restrictions

Please can I remind you that the school car park is for **staff use only**. Please park outside of school where it is safe and legal to do so. Please can I also ask that you respect our school neighbours by **not parking in front of drop-down kerbs**. Cars are not permitted, at any time, to park on the zig-zag markings near the zebra crossing or on the yellow lines near to school.

Please be considerate to our school community and other road users by parking safely and legally. **Local traffic enforcers will be visiting school to do checks an issue fines where drivers are breaking the law.**

Wrap Around Childcare at Merridale

We recently sent a forms link to families so that you could have your say on before and after school provision at Merridale. From the results of this survey, it is clear that we do not have enough families requiring this service to make this viable at Merridale at this time. We will keep this under review.

School Staff

At the end of last term, we were sad to say goodbye to Mrs Khelly who has been working as a Teaching Assistant in Year 1 who has left Merridale after nearly two years with us.

From this week, we have been joined by a new Teaching Assistant, Miss Bateman, who will be working in Year 1 supporting children with their learning.

Jewellery Policy

The only items that are considered appropriate for school, for health and safety reasons, are **one pair of small stud or sleeper earrings and watches**.

The school does not allow any other jewellery or cosmetics unless for cultural reasons. Any items that are worn must be removed or covered with a sweat band/plaster (to be provided from home) for PE and all items are the responsibility of the pupil. Please note that staff are not allowed to remove or look after jewellery for children.

Long hair must be tied back for PE lessons. Children must come to school dressed in their PE clothes on their PE day:

- Year 3 have PE on a Monday**
- Year 6 have PE on a Tuesday**
- Year 1 and Year 2 have PE on a Wednesday**
- Year 4 have PE on a Thursday**
- Year 5 have swimming on a Thursday**
- Reception and Year 5 have PE on a Friday**

School Events

At the end of this term, children enjoyed our egg hunt and end of term disco. We would like to thank parents and carers for their support with these events. Without your contributions, we would not be able to hold such wonderful events for our children. I am sure you can see how much they enjoyed them from the photos below.





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Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance

We believe that children need regular and continuous attendance at school, with as little disruption to the pattern of the school year as is possible. Every moment of the school day is vital and pupils are expected to be present, in class, at the start of the school day (8.50am)

Whenever possible, visits to doctors and dentists should be made out of school hours. Unaccounted for absences will be regarded as unauthorised.

If your child is ill, please telephone the school office to inform them on the first day of absence.

Our attendance policy states that we are unable to authorise any absence for family holiday, trips or visits. If you wish to discuss this further, please make an appointment to see Mrs Towle.

Children can come straight into the school building between 8.40am and 8.50am where they will be supervised by school staff.

All children must be collected from school between 3.10 and 3.20pm unless they have permission to walk home alone. **Please follow our one-way system at the end of the school day.**

Punctuality

Being late into school can be distressing for children and disrupts the normal morning registration process for the whole class. It may also cause distress and feelings of anxiety for your child. When pupils arrive late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability.

We have noticed an increase in late arrival to school over the past few months and this is a concern. Being frequently late to school adds up to lost learning for your child.

Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each school year

Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year

Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year

If your child arrives at school after 8.50am, they must enter school through the main office at the front of the building and they will be classed as late. Children arriving after 8.50am must be signed in by a parent or carer on the screen in the reception area.

Patterns of poor attendance and lateness will be followed up by the school's Educational Welfare Officer to look at ways of reducing these instances. If you require any support with these areas, please do not hesitate to contact the school.





Newsletter

What have we been learning?



Dudley Zoo Visit

On Thursday 7th April, Year 1 went on a visit to Dudley zoo. They saw lots of different animals and Dudley castle. They had a story time where they got to meet some of the animals.



Forest School

Nursery enjoyed looking for minibeasts in Forest School. They carefully moved the minibeasts into bug viewers using paint brushes. Nursery tried hard to identify the minibeasts using the identification cards.



Year 3 visit to Wolverhampton Art gallery

On Friday 1st April, Year 3 went to the Art Gallery in Wolverhampton and saw many works of art by British Artists.

There was one exhibition by Andy Holden who had a collection of cat figurines. We worked with Kate at the Gallery and created our own clay cats. We used many techniques to help us create them such as pinching, rolling and smoothing them down using our fingers and adding more detail using tools such as a pencil.



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What have we been learning?



Year 2 meet Julia Donaldson

On 15th March, Year 2 were lucky enough to attend an author event with Julia Donaldson and Lydia Monks. The children heard Julia tell them a story and some even performed on stage with her. We asked them some questions, met the Gruffalo and even got a signed copy of their book, 'What the Ladybird Heard'. The children had a fantastic time and were a credit to Merridale.



Year 3 visit Wroxeter

Year 3 visited Wroxeter Roman City which gave them an essential insight into the Roman Empire's impact on Britain. They learnt about the ruins there which were the basilica, bath suite, market hall, forum and the townhouse. Year 3 loved learning about how the Roman's bathed—they entered different rooms before they had a final bath, cold, warm and then hot. They also learnt a little Latin from their guide and enjoyed following a map around the townhouse to see what purpose each room had. Year 3 loved their day and enjoyed imagining what it would have been like there in the Roman Times.



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What have we been learning?



Investigating

Year 1 and 2 tried to make slime. We used shaving foam, activator and bicarbonate of soda to make stretchy slime. It didn't quite turn out as we expected but we discovered that science doesn't always turn out as expected!



Book Swap

Our latest book swap event was a great success. Year 6 worked hard to organise the books and assist younger children in choosing suitable books to take home and enjoy.

Milo

Children across the school continue to enjoy their weekly sessions with our school dog, Milo. He comes to visit each week to hear the children read. They love to stroke him and give him treats and he loves hearing them read to him.





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What have we been learning?



Year 6 visit Wolverhampton Archives

On Friday 25th March, Year 6 visited Wolverhampton Archives as part of their Discover unit "The First World War." They were able to look at a range of primary sources to help them investigate the impact The First World War had on the local area. They also learnt how the Archives store and categorise historical sources to preserve information about the past.



Year 5 Bread-making workshop

On Friday 18th March, Year 5 took part in a bread-making workshop with a chef from Aspens. The chef demonstrated making bread dough and then the children created their own different types of rolls using a range of toppings and herbs.



Football Tournament

On Friday 11th March, our boys football team competed in their first football tournament at Aldersley Village in an event that was organised by Wolves. They competed against a range of primary schools, all from Wolverhampton. The team played extremely well, showing excellent teamwork throughout. We are so proud of how well they played and how far they got! Well done boys!



Newsletter

What have we been learning?



Year 4 Bikeability

On Friday 18th March, some of year 4 had the opportunity to take part in the Bikeability Level 1 training. The children completed a range of courses on the playground. They were taught how to prepare for a journey and how to check their bikes. They also learnt how to set off, pedal, slow down and stop, including looking behind, cycling one handed, turning and controlling speed. The children all had a wonderful morning and received certificates and badges for their hard work.



Eat Them to Defeat Them

This term, we have loved learning how to keep healthy by eating a range of vegetables. The Eat them to Defeat Them campaign was a great success with children tasting a range of delicious vegetables each week.



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What have we been learning?



Year 4 visit Carding Mill Valley

On Tuesday 5th April, Year 4 went on their field trip to Carding Mill Valley. The children went to learn about the river as well as participate in some geography and science investigations. The children completed many field work tasks, including measuring the width, depth and velocity of the lower course of the river. The children then collected mini beasts using fishing nets and even had the opportunity to identify their mini beasts by examining them under a microscope! Finally, we finished our day with a walking tour across the hills led by the National Trust guides. We climbed some enormous hills and looked at photographs of Carding Mill Valley from the past.

knowledge and skills



Design and Technology

Year 1 made carriages as part of their D&T project in their Monarchy topic. They used craft knives to cut windows and sawed wood to make either moving axles or fixed axles.

I think you will agree, their finished carriages look amazing!



What have we been learning?

Science Week

The week beginning 14th March was British Science Week. The theme this year was "growing". Classes completed lots of investigations linked to growth including growing seeds, investigating the relationship between age and height, shoe size and hand size.

All children planted their own sunflowers and we created some bee café gardens to attract bees and insects after researching the best flowers to attract bees.

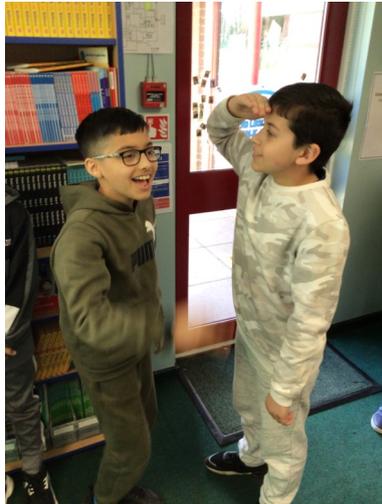


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What have we been learning? Science Week



Year 6 investigated whether or not the tallest people also have the largest hands. They created scatter diagrams and then looked for patterns in their results



Reception enjoyed planting their seeds and learning about what they need to grow.



Nursery used a trowel for the first time to dig down into the soil and place it carefully into a plant pot. They then made a hole in the soil and pushed a small sunflower seed down into it. A child has been selected each day to water the sunflowers to make sure that they grow.



Values

Newsletter

Merridale Values

Each half term, we focus on a core value. This half term we are learning about **CURIOSITY**.

What does **CURIOSITY** look like?

- Ask questions
- Seek answers
- Want to find out more
- Explore
- Try things out
- Make links
- Show interest
- Investigate



We will be looking out for children that demonstrate this value throughout the half term and rewarding them with special stickers. Please could you discuss curiosity with children at home and explore ways to reinforce it.





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Term Dates

- Monday 25th April:** School re-opens for Summer term
- WB 25th April:** Road safety focus week
- Tuesday 26th April:** Year 3 Seasonal Tasting workshop with Aspens
- Thursday 28th April:** Year 5 visit to Wolverhampton University (no swimming this week)
- Thursday 28th April:** Year 1 visit to Bantock House
- Monday 2nd May:** Bank Holiday—school closed
- Thursday 5th May—** Year 5 swimming session (first session of the term)
- Friday 6th May:** Eid Celebration Day in school—children are invited to wear celebration clothes for this if they wish.
- Friday 6th May 3.10-3.30pm:** School Library open session after school
- WB 9th May:** Summer term after school clubs start
- Monday 9th May-Thursday 12th May:** Year 6 SATs week
- Friday 13th May:** Milk payments to be made by today
- Monday 16th May:** Year 4 visit to Bantock House
- Tuesday 17th May:** Year 5 Singing in the Rain Music School event
- Wednesday 25th May:** School Photographs
- Friday 27th May:** Jubilee Celebration Day - children invited to wear red, white and blue
- Monday 30th May—Friday 3rd June:** Half term. School closed
- Monday 6th June—INSET Day—school closed to pupils**
- Wednesday 8th June:** Farm on Wheels visit for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and 2
- Thursday 9th June:** Year 4 cooking session
- Friday 10th June:** Food Bank Friday collection
- Wednesday 15th June:** Tiny Forest Science Day for Years 2/3/5/6
- Friday 17th June:** Year 5 Wolverhampton Art Gallery visit
- Wednesday 22nd—Friday 24th June:** Year 6 Borth residential
- Wednesday 6th July 1.45pm:** Sports Day (Reception to Year 6)
- Thursday 7th July 1.45pm:** RESERVE Sports Day
- WB Monday 11th July:** No after school clubs or tuition for the rest of term.
- Friday 15th July:** Nursery closes
- Friday 15th July:** Year 2 visit to Wildside (TBC)
- Tuesday 19th July 9.30am:** Year 6 Leavers Play performance for parents/carers
- Tuesday 19th July:** Summer disco
- Wednesday 20th July 3.20pm:** School closes to pupils for the Summer Holidays
- Thursday 21st July:** INSET Day—school closed to pupils
- Monday 5th September:** INSET Day—school closed to pupils
- Tuesday 6th September:** INSET Day—school closed to pupils
- Wednesday 7th September** –School re-opens to pupils

School library drop-in sessions

We are pleased to announce that we will be re-opening our school library for drop-in sessions on a Monday and Friday after school, starting from Friday 6th May. These sessions will be an opportunity for children and their parents/carers to visit our bungalow library to change their library book together. The library will be open from 3.10-3.30pm on a Monday and Friday each week and we encourage families to drop in and choose and enjoy some books together. School staff will be available to support you for these sessions.





Reading at home

Phonetically Matched Book

This book is specifically matched to your child's current phonic level. Please listen to your child read this book by themselves everyday for 20 minutes. If your child has finished reading their book within the week **please hear them read it more than once!** This is good practise and helps them become fluent.

This book will be changed every Wednesday. But make sure they bring their books back to school everyday for adults to hear them read in class.



Scan this QR Code to see how to use a Phonetically Matched Book Bag Book



Sharing Book This book is a book to enjoy together with your child. It may contain sounds your child does not know so help them to decode these and read together. This book will be changed every Wednesday.

Library Book Your child has chosen this book from the library to enjoy. It could be fiction or non-fiction. It may contain sounds your child does not

know so help them to decode these and read together. Please read together.

Record reading as shown:

Date	Book and Page Number	Remarks
16/3	A house fit for a mouse pg 1-5	Great sounding out
17/3	A house fit for a mouse pg 5-10	Retold the story well!
18/3	A house fit for a mouse pg 11	Answered questions with a bit of help



Rise to the

Reading Challenge!

We expect ALL children at Merridale to read (or enjoy a book with someone else) for **AT LEAST 20 minutes at least five times a week!**

Evidence from research shows that children who read daily are more successful learners, leading to increased confidence and enjoyment of reading.

The **role of parents and carers** is central to your child's success with this challenge. Older children may enjoy reading independently each day, however, younger children will require an adult to read with/to them in order to meet their target.

Please ensure that you provide a quiet space for your child to read at least 5 days per week at home and **sign** their reading record to confirm that they have read for **at least 20 minutes**.

Children may read their school reading book or library book. They may also read any other book that they might choose. All of these should be noted down in their reading record and signed by a parent/carer. Just note the date, book title and how many pages have been read and sign in the comments box. If you also wish to write a short comment on your child's reading, that would be great!

At the end of each week, every child who has read for at least 5 days (if not more) will receive a sticker for their class reading chart. The children with the most stickers at the end of each half term in each class will receive a small reward.

