



Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,
As we reach the end of the Autumn term, I would like to share some of the exciting learning opportunities our children have enjoyed so far this year. Can I also wish all of our families a Merry Christmas and a happy new year. We look forward to welcoming you back in 2020.

Forest School



As you will be aware, our Forest School classroom was destroyed by arsonists in December. Whilst we are incredibly sad that members of our local community would choose to destroy this special area, we have also been overwhelmed with the response to our recent crowd-funding campaign to raise money to re-develop the space. We would like to say a big thank you to all members of the school community as well as many members of the public that kindly donated. Our Just Giving page https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/merridale-primary-1?utm_term=7yyVQB4zg currently stands at an amazing £1,743 plus we have had other cash donations from families and Wolverhampton City council staff totalling £400. The City of Wolverhampton Council choir recently raised money for us by singing carols at the Civic centre:



We can't wait to start work on our new, improved Forest School!

On 18th December, we were also thrilled to accept the kind donation of an inflatable Santa's grotto from a local company, Bouncy Bouncy Boo. They donated the grotto after hearing how our forest school classroom had been destroyed. We had planned to use our Forest school shelter as Santa's grotto for our youngest pupils this year. We want to say a big thank you to Bouncy Bouncy Boo for getting in touch and helping us out.

www.bouncybouncyboocastlehire.co.uk

As you can see, the grotto looked fantastic and our children and families loved visiting Santa in there:



NSPCC Speak out. Stay safe

On Friday 22nd November, we were joined by the NSPCC to talk to children from Year 1-6 about staying safe. Specially trained staff and volunteers helped children to understand how to keep themselves safe from harm and how to get help if they have any worries. If you would like to continue this work at home with your children, find out more here:

www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/

Year 4 Class Assembly

Well done to Year 4 for their Water Cycle class assembly on Thursday 14th November. We enjoyed sharing your learning with you. Thanks to all parents and carers who came along too.





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Year 6 Music Workshop



On Tuesday 19th November, Year 6 were joined by a specialist music teacher from Wolverhampton Music School for a singing and rhythm session. The children had great fun and learned lots.

Children in Need



Thanks to everyone who donated money for Children in Need on 15th November. We raised £295 by wearing our pyjamas and selling cupcakes.

Year 2 and 4 Carol Singing

On Tuesday 10th December, Year 2 and 4 visited Sainsbury's to sing Christmas carols and raise money to re-build our Forest School classroom. They raised £230



Severn Trent Water Assembly



On Thursday 21st November, we were joined by a representative from Severn Trent Water to teach children ways to save water, how and why we need to stay hydrated and keeping waste water to a minimum. The assembly was followed -up by a workshop for Year 4 so they could learn even more about "wonderful water!"

Year 1 visit to Bantock House Museum

On Thursday 28th November, Year 1 enjoyed their visit to Bantock House to learn all about dolls and toys from the past.



Year 4 Swimming

This term, Year 4 have been enjoying their swimming lessons at Smestow School. We have seen many children develop their swimming strokes, speed and stamina. Well done Year 4!





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Book Fair Success

Thanks to everyone who came along to our Book Fair in November. We raised £179 in commission which will be spent on new books for school.



Year 5/6 Author Visit: David Baddiel

On Friday 15th November, Year 5 and 6 were invited to The Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton as guests of Wolverhampton Grammar School to enjoy an author presentation from children's author, David Baddiel. The writer talked about his latest book "The Taylor Turbochaser" as well as answering questions and reading from some of his highly-popular stories.



Photography in School

As you know, before we take and use photographs of children in school, we obtain parental permission. Many children do not have permission for their photographs to be taken and used. For this reason, we have taken the decision **not** to allow parents, carers, family members and visitors to school to take photographs of any children (apart from their own). This also means visitors to school will not be allowed to take any video footage whilst on the school site.

Please can we ask that adults and family members respect the wishes of those families who do not give their permission for photographs of their children to be taken.

Year 1-6 Cinema Visit

On Thursday 19th December, Year 1-6 children enjoyed visiting the Lighthouse Cinema to watch Frozen 2. The children really enjoyed their Christmas treat.



Safeguarding Update

Can I please remind all parents/carers, that if you need another adult to collect your child from school, then you need to inform school of this in advance. You can pop into the School Office to tell us, telephone us or even speak to staff on duty in a morning, but we **must** be informed. This is so we can make sure all children are safe. If we do not recognise the adult who is collecting a child, we will need to contact parents and carers to check.

Messy Church

We were joined by members of St Chad and St Marks' Church on Wednesday 20th November and Wednesday 11th December for their successful "Messy Church" sessions. Children and their families enjoyed the free, fun craft activities on offer.



Autumn Term prize Winners

We are proud to announce the end of term prize winners for this term. These children gave school staff the difficult task of selecting one child from each class for their end of term achievement and progress award. They are an example to their classmates for their excellent attitude and commitment to their learning. Well done!





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Christingle Service

Our annual Christingle service was held at St Chad and St Marks' church on Tuesday 17th December. Children and staff enjoyed celebrating together along with Reverend Helen Babiy.



Reception, Year 1 & 2 Christmas Play

On Tuesday 3rd and Wednesday 4th December, family and friends of our youngest children enjoyed their special performance of "A Little Nativity". The children did a wonderful job of bringing the Christmas story to life and kick-starting our festive celebrations.



Enterprise Week Sale

On Friday 13th December, from 2pm, we held our annual Enterprise Week sale for parents, carers, friends and family members. We have traditionally held this event in the Summer term but have decided to hold it at Christmas from now on. Our school community were invited to come along to this festive event to enjoy the goods and services on offer from the children as they raised money for their classes.



Diversity Performance

On Monday 4th November, some of our KS2 children represented Merridale at the annual Wolverhampton Diversity performance at Aldersley Stadium. The children danced brilliantly to really celebrate the diversity of Merridale and Wolverhampton.





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Milk Money

Milk money for the Spring term will be £13.50 unless your child is entitled to free school milk. Please note that children in Year 1 and Year 2 are **not** entitled to free school milk unless parents have applied for this (it is not included in the Universal Infant free School Meal entitlement). Please send milk money into school no later than 24th January.

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 in a named, sealed envelope. 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.

We ask that children stick to the same meal choice for half a term at a time (either school dinner or packed lunch), this is to assist the school kitchen in ordering food. If you do wish to change your child's meal option, please can an adult inform the school office.

Trim Trail

For safety reasons, please can I remind all families and children that the trim trail must not be used at the start and end of the school day.

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**.

Reducing Waste Paper and Improving

Communications

As you know, we are trying hard to reduce our paper use and become more environmentally friendly. Newsletters and letters not requiring a written reply slip will now only be sent via text message link to our website. In order to make sure you always receive our communications, please ensure the school office has a working contact mobile number for you.

We would love to hear your feedback on this new approach. Let us know at office@merridaleprimary.co.uk

Attendance and Punctuality

We continue to strive for our whole school attendance to stay at or above 96%! Well done to all of the children who have achieved this so far this year.

For the school year so far (September to December—Autumn term)

Whole school: 95.7%

Reception: 93%

Year 1: 93.2%

Year 2: 96.7%

Year 3: 95.7%

Year 4: 97.2%

Year 5: 96.1%

Year 6: 97.5%

The class with the highest attendance at the end of this term was Year 6 and they enjoyed an end of term treat to celebrate their achievement.

Can I remind you of the importance of children attending school every day unless they are unwell. If your child is ill, please telephone the school office to inform them on the first day of absence.

Can I remind you that children can come straight into the school building between 8.40am and 8.50am where they will be supervised by school staff. From 8.50am, children must enter school through the main office at the front of the building and they will be classed as late.

All children must be collected by an adult from school at 3.15pm unless they have permission to walk home alone. I appreciate your support in this.

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 do not hesitate to make an appointment to see Mr Lane. Patterns of poor attendance and punctuality 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.



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Term Dates

Friday 20th December 3.15pm: School closes for Christmas holidays

Monday 6th January: INSET Day—school closed to pupils

Tuesday 7th January: INSET Day—school closed to pupils

Wednesday 8th January: School re-opens to pupils for the Spring term.

Friday 17th January: Year 2 visit to Wolverhampton Art Gallery

WB Monday 20th January: After school clubs start this week

Thursday 23rd January: Year 6 Archives Visit

Friday 24th January: Year 6 3rd Borth payment due (£25)

Thursday 30th January 9.15am: Year 5 Class assembly—parents and carers invited to attend

Monday 3rd February 2.30pm: Nursery Book Party

Wednesday 5th February 2.30pm: Reception Book Party

Thursday 6th February 3.15pm: Year 1 Phonic Check meeting

Friday 7th February: FOOD BANK FRIDAY

Wednesday 12th February 3.30-8pm: Whole School Parent Consultations

Thursday 13th February 8.45am: School Nurse drop in session

Friday 14th February 3.15pm: School closes for half term

Monday 24th February: INSET day—school closed to pupils

Tuesday 25th February: School open to pupils

Thursday 27th February: Year 4 cooking session

Thursday 12th March: Year 4 Bikeability session

Thursday 19th March: Year 4 visit to Wolverhampton Art Gallery

Friday 20th March: Year 6 4th (final) Borth payment due (£25)

Thursday 19th April 9.15am: Year 2 Class assembly—parents and carers invited to attend

Thursday 2nd April: Easter Disco

Friday 3rd April 3.15pm: School closes for the Easter holidays

Monday 20th April: School re-opens for the Summer term.

Monday 4th May: After school clubs start this week

Thursday 7th May 9.15am: Year 1 class assembly—parents and carers are invited to attend.

Friday 8th May: Bank Holiday—School closed

WB Monday 11th May: Year 6 SATs week

Thursday 21st May: Year 5 visit to Grand theatre “Holes”

Friday 22nd May: Year 6 visit to Bilston Art Gallery

Friday 22nd May 3.15pm: School closes for half term