



December 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the festive season and eagerly anticipate the joyful celebrations ahead, we wanted to take a moment to reflect on the incredible journey we've had during this first term here at Merry Hill.

It has been an absolute pleasure to witness the growth, enthusiasm, and boundless energy of our pupils. From the first day of school to now, it feels magical to see the friendships that have blossomed, the skills that have developed, and the curiosity that continues to spark in our classrooms. I would like to share a few highlights for each of the year groups during this term.

NURSERY:

We are delighted to share some of the highlights that have shaped our learning adventures in Nursery! Nursery's journey began with an exciting first week, where our new starters not only met their teachers and peers but also seamlessly settled into daily routines, fostering a sense of security and belonging.

As the weeks unfolded, we witnessed the incredible development of friendships and teamwork among the children. Engaging in activities such as exploring repeating patterns in maths and enjoying "Please Mr Panda" during snack time allowed them to practice essential social and cognitive skills.

Our outdoor excursions, including visits to the forest and library, provided unique opportunities for hands-on learning and exploration. The children eagerly embraced the seasonal changes, collecting sticks, leaves and stones for imaginative mud kitchen recipes. During our "Monster Hunt" inspired by "We're Going on a Bear Hunt," they not only embarked on a thrilling adventure but also delved into number learning, focusing on the number 5.

As we celebrated National Inclusion Week, the children learned to sing and sign a song, fostering a culture of inclusivity and empathy. "Careers Day" allowed our little ones to express their aspirations, dressing up and sharing their dreams for the future.

The learning adventure continued with exploration of 2D shapes, engaging in autumnal activities, and contributing to the festive spirit by decorating the school Christmas tree. We also marked significant events such as Remembrance Day, instilling a sense of reflection and respect.

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RECEPTION

We are delighted to share a glimpse into the vibrant learning experiences that have unfolded in Reception over the autumn term. Our Reception pupils have embraced each moment, forging new friendships, and eagerly exploring a diverse range of activities.

In their inaugural week, our Reception stars impressed us with their confidence and adaptability. From learning teachers' names to engaging in imaginative play in the mud kitchen, they set a positive tone for the term. The introduction of the Golden Rules reinforced values of care, kindness and teamwork, observed keenly by our watchful teachers.

Reception then delved into the theme "Time Travellers," as the children embarked on a captivating journey through history and future aspirations. In Inclusion Week, they learned Makaton and understood its role in communication. Sukkot brought an enriching cultural experience, with the little ones building their own Sukkahs and gazing at the stars through gaps in the roof.

The fascination with autumn unfolded in subsequent weeks, with the children exploring the changing environment, fine-tuning motor skills and crafting an exquisite Autumn Wreath in the forest. Mathematical concepts took centre stage as they practiced one-to-one correspondence and delved into the world of numbers, culminating in the design of their imaginative "Magic Pots."

Literacy soared to new heights with the introduction of the enchanting story "Whatever Next." Collaborative storytelling, expressing emotions and discussions about book handling fostered a love for reading. Space exploration brought excitement as the children chipped away at ice to discover hidden treasures, emphasizing global citizenship.

In a dedicated segment on e-safety, our tech-savvy Reception stars learned to navigate the digital world responsibly, utilising Google Earth to explore our surroundings safely.

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The excitement continued as our mini explorers ventured into the forest for the first time, reading enchanting stories like "Stanley's Stick" and "Stick and Stone." Their smiles, captured in photos, tell stories of a love for learning that started early on.

In their journey through Reception, our children are not just learners; they are storytellers, explorers and budding mathematicians. Each week brings new discoveries, and we are thrilled to witness the joy, growth, and excitement that define their personal and collective adventures at Merry Hill.



YEAR 1

As we reflect on the incredible journey of our Year 1 Lions and Panthers, it is with immense joy that we share a glimpse into the vibrant tapestry of learning that has unfolded over the past weeks. Our little learners, full of curiosity and eagerness, have embarked on a series of adventures that have left indelible marks on their educational journey.

The magic of our first week in Year 1 enveloped Lions and Panthers as they explored new classrooms, forging friendships and settling into routines. Guided by the Golden Rule "Do look after property," they embarked on a delightful hunt for useful classroom belongings. The warmth and kindness displayed by our young stars set a heart-warming tone for the exciting term ahead.

Immersing themselves in the enchanting world of 'Funnybones' by Janet and Allan Ahlberg, our Year 1 pupils became storytellers and label-makers. Predicting story twists and applying the Word Aware approach, they connected English with Science, confidently labelling 'Funnybones' skeletons. Lists became a tool for creativity, with the children jotting down all the places their skeletal friends could explore.

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Numeracy took on a colourful twist as Year 1 explored various ways to represent numbers. Tens frames, bead strings, dice and numicon became their tools of discovery. Outdoor adventures in the forest brought maths to life as they used natural items to create unique representations, fostering a love for learning that extends beyond the classroom. Inclusion Week sparked meaningful conversations about individuality and diversity. Inspired by the story 'Mixed,' the children painted shapes in the style of Clarice Cliff, embracing and celebrating differences. The values of inclusion echoed beyond the classroom as parents were encouraged to engage in conversations and explore diverse books at home.

Year 1 scientists delved into the mysteries of the human body, exploring senses and playing 'Simon Says.' Discussions about taste, touch, sight, sound and smell laid the foundation for upcoming senses poems.

Armed with maps and a spirit of exploration, Year 1 embraced geography by studying their school grounds. From messy maps to aerial views of the forest, the children honed directional language skills. The call for parents to create home maps and discuss local parks added an interactive touch to the geographical adventures.

Subtracting became an adventure of its own, with part-part-whole models and tens frames guiding the way. Engaging problem-solving challenges sparked creative thinking, prompting parents to create subtraction word problems at home using everyday items. Maths became not just a subject but a journey of discovery.

In the spirit of remembrance, Year 1 delved into the significance of poppies. Creating their own poppy artwork, the children learned the history behind this symbol of remembrance. Parents joined the exploration by spotting poppies in the community, visiting the school memorial and engaging in poppy-related activities at home.

Penning an innovative report about the Gruffalo, Year 1 introduced the world to Zapper, a fierce class alien. Writing sentences with a 'who' and 'what,' they focused on capitalisation and punctuation. The call for parents to design characters at home and create adjective word banks added a touch of creativity to the writing journey.

Delving into history, Year 1 explored the life of Louie Braille, inventor of the Braille system. Sequencing events on a timeline, the children pondered happy and sad moments in his life. Thank you to all our families who used the knowledge organiser at home to further spark conversations about Braille's significant impact.

Engaging in English, Year 1 immersed themselves in the text 'Supertato.' Predictions, story mapping, and exploring past tense verbs enriched their language skills. Parents were invited to support reading at home, turn everyday objects into characters, and identify exclamation marks in their reading materials.

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YEAR 2

As we embrace the concluding days of Year 2's last autumn term at Merry Hill, let's look at the incredible learning journey they have undertaken this term.

Our English adventure unfolded with a mysterious twist, leading the children to explore London landmarks and connect the dots between Geography and History. The culmination of this exploration resulted in the creation of personal diaries inspired by 'Katie in London.' Through comprehension challenges and self-assessment, the children showcased not just writing skills but a genuine passion for storytelling.

In Design Technology, the budding architects dived into a captivating project—constructing Tudor houses. Inspired by the Great Fire of London, their creativity soared as they explored structures, materials and various joining techniques. From crafting bridges to replicating Big Ben using unconventional materials, their ingenuity knows no bounds.

Science became a realm of fascination as the children explored materials and delved into the term "absorbent". Predicting, experimenting and recording results became second nature. This scientific journey lays the foundation for a deeper understanding, setting the stage for future explorations.

History came alive as Year 2 delved into the significance of Remembrance. Padre Nicoll's visit and the silent reflection at the war memorial provided poignant moments, emphasising the importance of remembering those who sacrificed for our freedom.

In the realm of Mathematics, the focus extended to counting in multiples of 10 and enhancing number fluency. From deciphering patterns in adding 10 to practical applications, the children showcased their mathematical prowess. The "think 10" strategy became a valuable tool, reinforcing their understanding of addition and laying the groundwork for subtraction.

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English lessons transformed into a creative haven with a deep dive into poetry forms and lively performances, including Benjamin Zephaniah's 'Talking Turkeys.' Artistic expression flourished as the children explored the works of ceramic artist Clarice Cliff and moulded their own clay pots.

National Inclusion Week became a celebration of diversity and togetherness. Through engaging activities and heartfelt discussions, the children embraced the principles of equality and equity, fostering a sense of belonging.

As we bid farewell to this memorable autumn term for our Year twos, we are immensely proud of the progress and enthusiasm they have demonstrated.



Finally on behalf of the entire school and Governing body we would like to say an enormous thank you to you, the parents and carers, for your continuous support. Your involvement and encouragement play a crucial role in making Merry Hill the nurturing and thriving learning community that we are.

We wish you all a joyful and restful holiday season. For those who celebrate Christmas, may the spirit of Christmas bring warmth, love, and laughter to your homes.

See you in the New Year!

Melissa Adams MA, NPQH
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