



20th December 2024

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 have had during this first term here at Merry Hill. It has been a term filled with growth, discovery and plenty of reasons to celebrate as we watch our pupils thrive.

From the exciting first day of school to where we are now, it has been incredible to see the children's confidence blossom, their friendships grow and their enthusiasm for learning shine through every day. The curiosity and creativity they bring to the classroom continue to inspire us daily.

As we wrap up this term, we would like to share a few highlights from each year group and celebrate what has been accomplished so far.

Nursery

We are thrilled to share some wonderful highlights from our learning journey in Nursery! Our adventure began with an exciting first week, where our new starters met their teachers and peers, quickly settling into daily routines and developing a strong sense of security and belonging.

As the weeks progressed, we watched friendships blossom and teamwork flourish. The children explored repeating patterns in maths and enjoyed the story "Please Mr Panda" during snack time, honing their social and cognitive skills along the way.

Our outdoor adventures, including trips to the forest and library, offered rich opportunities for hands-on learning and discovery. The children enthusiastically observed the seasonal changes, gathering sticks, leaves, and stones to create imaginative mud kitchen recipes. Inspired by "We're Going on a Bear Hunt", they embarked on a "Monster Hunt," combining thrilling fun with number learning, particularly focusing on the number 5.

During National Inclusion Week, the children learned to sing and sign a song, promoting inclusivity and empathy. "Careers Day" was a joyful occasion where our little ones dressed up and shared their dreams for the future.

The learning continued with exploring 2D shapes, engaging in autumnal activities, and helping to decorate the school Christmas tree. We also observed important events like Remembrance Day, fostering a sense of reflection and respect.

It has been a busy and rewarding term, and it feels incredible to see how far we have come since September! The children have done a fantastic job adapting to Nursery routines and following the Golden Rules.

As the photos below show, the children have been developing a range of knowledge, skills, and experiences:

- Understanding the World: Looking for signs of autumn in the forest and discussing the changes they observe.
- Maths: Talking about shapes and counting the things they discover.

We look forward to even more learning adventures ahead!

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Talking about our books and retelling our class stories (Literacy, Communication and Language)



Working with our friends to problem solve (Personal, Social and Emotional Development) and following instructions to create a piece of music (Expressive Arts and Design).



Creating our own designs based on the work of artists such as Piet Mondrian (Expressive Arts and Design, Physical Development).



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Celebrating a range of religions and cultures, such as Diwali and Christmas (Understanding the World)



Reception

We are excited to share a glimpse into the vibrant learning experiences that have taken place in Reception this autumn term! Our Reception children have embraced every moment, forming new friendships and exploring a diverse range of activities with enthusiasm.

During their first week, our Reception stars amazed us with their confidence and adaptability. From learning their 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 the values of care, kindness, and teamwork, which our watchful teachers observed with pride.

The children then embarked on an inspiring "Time Travellers" theme, exploring both history and future aspirations. During Inclusion Week, they learned Makaton and discovered its importance in communication. Sukkot offered a wonderful cultural experience, where the children built their own Sukkahs and enjoyed gazing at the stars through the roof gaps.

As the term progressed, the magic of autumn captured their imagination. They explored seasonal changes, honed their motor skills, and crafted a beautiful Autumn Wreath in the forest. In maths, they practiced one-to-one correspondence and explored numbers, culminating in the creation of their imaginative "Magic Pots."

Literacy took flight with the enchanting story Whatever Next. Through collaborative storytelling, emotional expression, and learning how to handle books, the children developed a love of reading. Their excitement grew during space-themed activities, where they chipped away at ice to uncover hidden treasures, reinforcing their sense of global citizenship.

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E-safety was another key focus, where our tech-savvy Reception pupils learned how to navigate the digital world responsibly, even using Google Earth to explore their surroundings safely.

The children's forest adventures were filled with wonder as they read stories like Stanley's Stick and Stick and Stone. Their joyful smiles, captured in photos, tell the story of a love for learning that began early and continues to flourish.

Throughout this term, our Reception children have grown as storytellers, explorers, and budding mathematicians. Each week brings new discoveries, and we are thrilled to witness the joy, growth, and curiosity that define their individual and collective adventures at Merry Hill.



Year 1

As we come to the end of the first term, it is the perfect time to reflect on the fantastic progress our Year 1 children have made. The children in Lions and Panthers classes have settled beautifully, embracing routines, following the Golden Rules, and demonstrating a real enthusiasm for learning. We are thrilled to share some key moments that highlight their growth and achievements this term.

The magic of the first week in Year 1 saw Lions and Panthers exploring their new classrooms, forming friendships, and learning the importance of looking after property through a fun classroom treasure hunt. Their warmth and kindness set the stage for an exciting term ahead.

In English, our Year 1 children delved into the delightful world of Funny bones by Janet and Allan Ahlberg. They became storytellers and label-makers, using the Word Aware approach to label skeletons and predict story twists. Creativity flourished as they made lists of the places their skeletal friends could visit.

In maths, the children explored numbers in a hands-on way using tens frames, bead strings, dice, and Numicon. Their outdoor adventures in the forest brought maths to life, as they used natural items to create unique representations of numbers, fostering a love of learning that extended beyond the classroom.

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Inclusion Week sparked meaningful discussions about diversity and individuality. Inspired by the book *Mixed*, the children painted shapes in the style of Clarice Cliff, celebrating differences and encouraging conversations about inclusion at home.

Our young scientists explored the wonders of the human body and senses, playing “Simon Says” to learn about taste, touch, sight, sound, and smell. These discoveries laid the foundation for creating sense poems.

Geography came alive as Year 1 children explored their school grounds with maps, creating messy maps and studying aerial views of the forest. They honed their directional language skills, with parents encouraged to make home maps and discuss local parks.

In maths, subtraction turned into an adventure with part-part-whole models and tens frames. Problem-solving challenges encouraged creative thinking, and parents joined in by creating subtraction problems using everyday items.

During Remembrance Day, the children learned about the significance of poppies and created beautiful poppy artwork. Families supported this learning by spotting poppies in the community and visiting the school's memorial.

In writing, Year 1 reported on the Gruffalo and introduced their own class alien, Zapper. They focused on writing sentences with correct capitalisation and punctuation. Parents added to the fun by designing characters and creating adjective word banks at home.

History lessons brought the story of Louis Braille to life. The children sequenced events in his life on a timeline, reflecting on his happy and challenging moments. Thank you to all the families who used the knowledge organiser at home to further explore Braille's impact.

In English, *Supertato* was a big hit! The children made predictions, mapped out the story, and explored past tense verbs. Parents supported reading at home by identifying exclamation marks and turning everyday objects into fun characters.

Our trip to Reveley Lodge was a highlight, where the children learned about life in the past. This linked perfectly to their history lessons on Victorian schools, giving them a hands-on experience of what education was like long ago.

We are so proud of the progress and enthusiasm our Year 1 children have shown. Thank you for your continued support at home — together, we are creating a joyful and inspiring learning journey!



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Year Two

As we approach the end of the autumn term, it is the perfect time to reflect on the incredible learning journey our Year 2 children have undertaken. Their enthusiasm, creativity, and growth have shone through in every subject, and we are delighted to share some of the highlights with you.

In English, the children embarked on an exciting adventure, uncovering the wonders of London landmarks. Inspired by Katie in London, they created personal diaries, weaving together their knowledge of Geography and History. Through comprehension challenges and self-assessment, they developed their writing skills while demonstrating a true passion for storytelling.

In Design Technology, our budding architects took on the challenge of constructing Tudor houses, inspired by the Great Fire of London. Their creativity flourished as they explored structures, materials, and joining techniques. From building bridges to replicating Big Ben with unconventional materials, their imagination knew no bounds.

Science sparked curiosity and wonder as the children investigated different materials and learned the term “absorbent.” Predicting, experimenting, and recording results became second nature, laying the foundation for future scientific exploration.



History came to life during Remembrance. Padre Nicoll’s visit and the silent reflection at the war memorial provided moving moments for the children, reinforcing the importance of honouring those who sacrificed for our freedom.

In Mathematics, the children focused on counting in multiples of 10 and developing their number fluency. They honed their skills by identifying patterns and applying the “think 10” strategy to solve addition problems — skills that will support their future work on subtraction.

English also became a hub of creativity as the children explored different poetry forms and performed Benjamin Zephaniah’s lively poem Talking Turkeys. Their artistic flair continued in Art, where they studied the work of ceramic artist Clarice Cliff and created their own beautiful clay pots.

Our artist this term was Piet Mondrian. We learnt that he used primary colours and lines to create his abstract artwork. We experimented with colour, shape and some pastels. We learnt how to make lighter and darker shades using black and white. Our favourite memory was when we got to go in the forest to create our Mondrian inspired masterpieces.



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During National Inclusion Week, Year 2 celebrated diversity and togetherness. Through engaging activities and heartfelt discussions, they embraced the values of equality and equity, fostering a strong sense of belonging and community.

We were so excited when the fire service came to visit us! First, we asked questions to Stuart and Max and they told us some interesting facts, such as they only have one minute to get changed into uniform and be ready to leave the station. After the anticipating wait, we boarded the fire engine, looked at the tools and even saw the huge fire hoses being used!



We are incredibly proud of all the hard work, growth, and enthusiasm shown by our Year 2 children this term. Thank you for your continued support at home — together, we are helping them thrive on this exciting educational journey!

Thank you

We would like to say thank you and farewell to Mrs Currie, who will be leaving us this term. Mrs Currie has been a wonderful support during lunchtimes and across Early Years over the past few years. She has always come to school with a big smile, a carefree attitude, and a readiness to help children learn and grow. Her positive energy and fantastic communication with the children have made a real difference, and her willingness to jump into any role needed has been invaluable. We will truly miss her warmth, dedication, and joyful presence. Thank you, Mrs Currie, and we wish you all the very best in your next chapter!

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 2025!

Best wishes

Melissa Adams
Headteacher

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