



29th September 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

We have had a wonderful week here at Merry Hill; a particular highlight for me was listening to some very proud Year 2 writers who came to my office to read their innovated versions of 'Pumpkin Soup'.

National Inclusion Week

As a school we have been busy celebrating National Inclusion Week and all the things we do at Merry Hill to ensure everyone is included. In our assembly on Monday, the children learnt the difference between equity and equality. Equality means that everyone has the same chances or gets the same treatment. Everyone is treated equally. Equity means that everyone has the same chances – just like equality – but equity also means considering different people's situations so that they really are treated fairly. We discussed the pictures below of three children trying to watch a football match over a fence.



The second picture shows equality – all three children are given the same number of boxes to stand on, but one child still cannot see over the fence to watch the football match. The third picture takes into account what the children need to be successful; 1 child is only given 1 box and another child is given 3 boxes, but they all have exactly what they need to be successful. Each class have been doing their own activities to understand and celebrate inclusion, which you can see on the year group blogs (link below).

Forces Family Coffee Morning

It was wonderful to see some of our forces families at our coffee morning on Wednesday. This was a great opportunity for the families to meet one another and discuss ways we can support our military children and their families.

Forest Clean Up

I am also looking forward to welcoming a number of you this afternoon and Monday morning for our first 'Forest Clean Up' sessions; we are extremely grateful for your support to help enhance our forest area. The children absolutely love learning outside as you can see below.

School Development Plan

Each year we amend our School Development Plan to ensure that our practice evolves and meets the needs of our children. Over the last few weeks, our staff and Governors have come together to discuss the school priorities for this academic year. During the meeting, the Governors challenged and questioned the Senior Leadership Team in order to finalise our priorities and ensure that everyone was in agreement with the vision and next steps for the school. Our 5 priorities are as follows:

1. **To enhance provision to enable greater independence**
2. **To build lifelong effective word learners** (now in the second year of its planned implementation)
3. **To offer comprehensive support to parents and carers, addressing the challenges arising from the cost of living crisis and other pressing needs.**

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4. **To develop and foster a culture of celebrating diversity and practising anti-racism throughout the school community** (now in the second year of its planned implementation)
5. **To rebuild our History curriculum for our 'curious learners' and ensure there is relevance to their lives**

We had an assembly and discussion with the children about their views of the school, namely what they liked about it and how it could be made even better. Everyone's voice is heard to ensure our vision reflects the views of our whole learning community. We discussed this year's priorities with the children and have their version below:

School Environment

My school leaders will make sure that my education is the best it can be by

- Helping everyone feel happy and cared for at school
- Training my teachers so I am always challenged
- Working with my parents/carers so they can help me at home

Vocabulary Development

I will be learning new vocabulary within the school because ...

- It will help me understand what I am learning
- It will help me understand what I read so that I enjoy reading
- It will help me to communicate with my friends

I will be supported to do this by:

- Using my knowledge organisers and vocabulary displays to help me understand what I am learning
- My teacher teaching me new words that I can practise in the lesson
- Looking at the different parts of words and learning their meaning
- Practising the words in the word pot
- Working with my parents who will know what I am learning in school because we look at Seesaw/Tapestry/Blogs together

Being Independent

I will be learning to become more independent because...

- It will help me understand how I learn
- It will help me become more confident and ready to take on challenges
- It will help me get ready for the next year group

I will be supported to do this by:

- Answering every question in class and explaining my thinking
- Practising new learning with my teacher until I am confident
- Linking new learning to older learning to make it stick
- Being encouraged to work alone and using resources in the classroom if I find the learning tricky
- Discussing my learning like my teachers do (metacognition)

Equality

I will understand about cultural inclusion and become a global citizen because...

- It will help me to understand race and racism
- It will help me to learn about different cultures and celebrations
- It will help me to understand why everyone matters

I will be supported to do this by:

- Learning from religious leaders from our local community
- Reading multicultural texts

We look forward to sharing advancements about each priority throughout the year.

'Healthy Learners' – *how we ensure we are ready to learn*

National Inclusion Week

On Wednesday afternoon, we were delighted to welcome Dr. Ruddock, who is a parent and Governor at the school. He led an assembly about Black History Month, which takes place every year in October. Dr. Ruddock explained to the children what Black History Month is all about and why it is so

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important to celebrate black people and their achievements throughout history. He introduced pupils to many inspirational people who have made a difference, both in their time and, also, in ours. For example, he told us all about Lewis Latimer, an American inventor who helped improve the process to make filaments in light bulbs and make them more affordable for the general public to buy. Without Mr. Latimer, our pupils may still be reading and writing by candlelight which, everyone in the assembly agreed, would be very challenging and rather dangerous! Dr Ruddock also talked a little bit about Nelson Mandela and what an important difference he made to life for black people living in South Africa and about Mary Seacole, a Jamaican nurse, like his own mother, who did some incredible work during the Crimean War including finding out more about Cholera and how to improve the treatment of it. Thank you, Dr Ruddock, for coming in and teaching our pupils all about Black History Month – we all learnt so much from you!

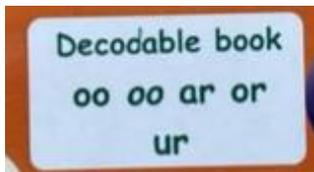
'Ambitious Learners' – how we act when we learn

Reading

It has been a few weeks now since the children first began bringing reading books home. At Merry Hill, we highly value reading and believe this is the one of the most important skills to provide a child. As such, we want to make you aware of our processes to ensure we can successfully work together to support our children's reading journey.

The children will have 2 reading books: 1 decodable and 1 colour spot (shared reading) book

Decodable book



Labelled with a sticker like this.

This book will be given to your child based on their **phonic ability**. The children will and should find these easy to read and decode. This text will not be too challenging, but is designed for the children to practice:

1. Decoding (breaking down the sounds)
2. Fluency (speed and flow to reading)
3. Comprehension (understanding of the text)
4. Expression (change of voice to make it enjoyable to listen to)

Our reading scheme works alongside our Synthetic Phonics Programme called ELS. Every child is assessed on their phonic knowledge **every 5 weeks**. Following this assessment, teachers will allocate reading books which match the children's current phonic understanding.

This may mean that if we see your child has a gap in their phonic knowledge, they bring home a book to help fill this gap by exposing them to the sounds they are not reading confidently or consistently. This book will expose them to the sound more frequently and will encourage the children to store this sound in their long term memory. During the child's next assessment it is expected that, as a result of additional practice of the sound, there will no longer be a gap in their learning i.e the child can confidently read the sound alone and within words.

Colour spot (shared reading book)

This book is to be a shared reading book for you to read alongside your child. You may wish to take turns reading it or each read a page at a time. This is a good opportunity to listen to your child read a slightly more challenging text and enjoy the experience of reading a book together.

You may wish to ask some questions to check on your child's understanding of the text.

For example:

Where/when is the story set?

Is there a good/bad character? Who is it? How can you tell?

Who do you meet first?

Can we work out how _____ feels about _____ ?

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'Curious Learners' – what we learn

Please click on the link below to have a peak at some of the inclusion activities we have all been doing this week:

<https://merryhill.org.uk/our-learning-community/year-group-blogs/>

'Collaborative Learners' – our place in the world

Empowering Educational Collaboration in our Local Community

One of our schools ambitions over the last few years, is to collaborate with other schools and share excellent practice. This week our teachers met with other local schools including Ashfield Jr, to review our curriculum and gather ideas to create a more enriching learning experience. Together we discussed improvements, teaching methods, and various ways to engage pupils.

As we move ahead in the academic year, we will continue these collaborations, notably with Ashfield Jr to ensure we provide a curriculum that prepares our pupils for the next stage in their learning. We believe at Merry Hill, working collaboratively and participating in joint events with Ashfield and local schools will make our curriculum for your children even stronger.

Cost of Living

Each week we include a free (or inexpensive) activity that you might like to try with your family. If

Ebury Way

What:

The Ebury Way is a 3.5-mile rail trail in Hertfordshire between Watford and Rickmansworth. The trains and track have long gone and in its place we now have a great route to walk or cycle on. The route crosses the Grand Union Canal and three rivers; the River Colne, the River Chess and the River Gade. Passing lakes and fields in Rickmansworth, the path is shared by walkers and cyclists. Autumn is a wonderful time of year to visit this beautiful trail.



anyone has any tips or ideas of free or inexpensive activities you would like to share with our community, please let the office know. I hope you find these useful.

Have a lovely weekend everyone.

Sincerely,

Ms Melissa Adams
Headteacher

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Parent Guides to Online Safety



A Parent's Guide to Social Media



A Parent's Guide to Sharing Pictures



A Parent's Guide to Gaming



A Parent's Guide to Online Grooming



A Parent's Guide to Live Streaming



A Parent's Guide to Online Influencers



A Parent's Guide to Fake News



A Parent's Guide to Privacy Settings



Online safety is when young people know who they can tell if they feel upset by something that has happened online.

Parents please contact your school to enquire attending their next e-safety workshop or have any concerns.

Working with Home Office 'PREVENT', The Police and Crime Commissioner and Children's Safeguarding Partnerships to help keep children safe online.

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Developed in partnership with

