



4th April 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Last weekend, the sun shone brightly as our Merry Hill team prepared the school for our Open Day. We were delighted to welcome local families and showcase what makes our school such a special place. Events like this highlight the passion and dedication of our wonderful team, who take great pride in our school community.

At the same time, many in our community were celebrating Eid, and we hope it was a joyous occasion filled with love and togetherness.

As we approach the end of the term, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the entire Merry Hill team for their continued commitment to our children and families. We encourage you to help us spread the word about our fantastic school and keep our community thriving. If you know any prospective families, we will continue offering school tours next term and we would love to welcome them!



Nursery Phonics Workshop

Thank you to all the Nursery parents and carers who attended our phonics workshop on Wednesday. We loved sharing the important early stages of our phonics programme and helping you understand how we use phonics to support your child's exciting reading journey. For those who were unable to attend, the information will be emailed to you and can also be found on our website.

Maths at Merry Hill

On Tuesday a Primary Maths Specialist visited our school to review our implementation of 'Teaching for Mastery' in maths. She met with Mrs Ineson in her role as Maths Lead, carried out a learning walk to see Maths in action and met with me to share her findings. Mrs Ineson has

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been providing targeted professional development in maths for a number of years and our teachers really proved that they are indeed masters of the mastery approach! It was a really positive visit with the Primary Maths Specialist noticing that teachers are carefully planning small, sequential steps within maths lessons and using specialist resources which perfectly support our children's learning. A highlight was her identifying how our children are doing the thinking and confidently talking like mathematicians which has come about because of carefully planned representations in maths and the questions our teachers ask. For example, in one of the Y2 lessons, a child said "If I know that $2+2+2$ is equal to 3 groups of 2, I will know 3×2 ".

Therapeutic Behaviour Training

The past two weeks, all staff at Merry Hill have taken part in a refresher training session on our Therapeutic Approach to Behaviour, ensuring that we continue to provide a consistent, supportive, and nurturing environment for our children. We are delighted to share that our wonderful Learning Support Assistant, Mrs Kemp, is now fully trained as a Lead Behaviour Practitioner. Alongside Mrs Summers, our experienced Lead Behaviour Specialist, she led the training with expertise and enthusiasm, reinforcing our shared commitment to positive behaviour support. The session was exceptionally well-delivered, providing valuable insights and practical strategies to help all staff whether in the classroom, the office, or the playground, approach behaviour in a unified and therapeutic way. It is reassuring to know that we are all aligned in our practice, speaking the same language and working together to create a safe, respectful, and caring school community for all our pupils.


'Ambitious Learners' – *how we act when we learn*

This Week's Focus: The Golden Rule – 'We are kind and helpful'

Team Points Focus: Being kind - 'You are good at that.'

At Merry Hill we have a carefully designed and structured behaviour curriculum to support our children's development. It is designed to help children understand and practice positive behaviour in a structured way. This is delivered continually through PSHE, stories and assemblies as well as through every interaction between children and adults within the school.

This week our stem sentence is, "You are good at that" which will support children to have positive interactions with their peers and practice being kind to one another.

31.3.25	<p>saying "You are good at that!" when you spot someone doing something you admire. We are listening out for children praising one another. GR We are kind and helpful</p>	 <p>you are good at that!</p>
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'Curious Learners' – *what we learn*

Year Group Blogs

Each week the class teachers post blogs, which enable you to find out more about our education offer and reinforce learning at home. Please click on the link below to find out more:

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

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The Easter Story

This week our Year 2 children had a visit from the Watford Schools Trust who led a wonderful session exploring the Easter story. The children thoroughly enjoyed learning about the events of Easter and further developed their understanding about the importance of Easter for Christians. Here at Merry Hill, we are always keen to learn about different traditions, stories and cultures and celebrate what makes each of us unique. Thank you the WST for providing this experience for the children.

Purple Up Day – Friday 25th April

April is the month of the military child and each year we take great delight in celebrating Purple Up Day, a day assigned to celebrating military children. On Friday 25th April we invite all the children to come to school wearing a purple accessory such as socks, hairbands, a ribbon or even a badge, to show our support. Purple is the chosen colour as it represents the combined colours of our military branches. During the day the children will take part in some exciting team building exercises led by one of our military parents and will learn about the experiences of military children through an assembly led by Padre Chapman. Thank you for your continued support; we look forward to seeing a wonderful display of purple on 25th April!

Parent Partnership

Research tells us that the most important learning opportunities occur through conversations and play between a child and others at home. As mentioned previously, we will continue to suggest some ideas and activities aimed at promoting language and literacy for you to use at home.



Stick Crafts and Activities



The humble stick has been entertaining children for generations! From Poohsticks to journey sticks, and birds nests to wind chimes, the play possibilities are endless. Why not try one of these ideas during the holidays!



Dens – an activity which involves team work and collaboration. Use fallen branches and sticks to build a den in the woods. Collect long, straight branches and sticks as well as lots of thick bendy sticks. You will also need materials to cover your den such as dried leaves, twigs and grass. (Please steer clear of bracken as it can be home to ticks). By working together, you will naturally communicate and develop language about the den and materials used.



Journey stick – these have been around for many years and were used by Native Americans and Aboriginal people to share stories from their travels. To make one, find an interesting stick and wrap some thread around it. As you explore, look for natural items to remind you of your adventure. A feather might remind you of beautiful birdsong while a leaf might help you remember a tree climbed. Tuck your treasures into the thread to keep them safe then, at the end of the adventures, use them to share stories about what you have seen and done. Plenty of opportunity here to discuss which items you will collect and why. Model sentences by creating

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your own journey stick and extend your child's language by repeating sentences back with further detail.



Stick man – make a stickman by laying out twigs arms, legs and a body on the ground. Search for leaves and grass to make the hair, and find seeds and flower petals for the eyes, nose and ears. Discuss which body parts you are making and the names of the items being used to create each body part. Why not make a whole family of stick people that look like your family?

Poohsticks – have a go at Winnie the Pooh's favourite game. Each player finds a stick then stands on a bridge over a stream or river. Everyone must drop their sticks into the water at the same time. (Make sure the water is flowing towards you so it carries the sticks under the bridge) Now race to the other side of the bridge to see whose stick floats out first. This is a great opportunity to develop ordinal language such as first, second but also to discuss what has affected the sticks passage. Did it get stuck on some rocks or tangled in some weeds etc. Which stick length and thickness seems to work better? Does it matter where you stand on the bridge and why? Even just talking through the instructions will develop communication and language skills.



Catapult – find a strong forked twig and tie a length of elastic to each side. Use your catapult to ping berries or rolled up balls of grass. Whilst collecting materials, discuss what shape we need the twig to be and why some sticks are more suitable than others, for instance is it too brittle? What changes could we make to the catapult to make the items travel further?

I hope you all have a wonderful and relaxing break. We look forward to welcoming you back on Tuesday 22nd April.

Sincerely,

Ms Melissa Adams
Headteacher

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Our Easter Trail is on Saturday 19th April

11 am – 1 pm,

Join Winnie the Pooh for an Easter Adventure!

Follow Winnie the Pooh and friends on a magical Easter Trail at King George's Recreation Ground, Bushey!

Bring the whole family for a morning of fun, adventure, and Easter surprises! Solve clues, and see if you can help Pooh and his friends find the sweetest Easter clues!

🌸 Perfect for little explorers and Pooh Bear fans of all ages!

We have two different trails:

- Younger children: A smaller, age-friendly trail around the playground, the trail will take approximately 30 minutes.
- Older children: A more challenging trail that spans the entire park, the trail will take approximately 45 minutes to an hour

Hope to see you there!

Each child will receive an Easter Treat.

Just £2 per child

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