



# MERRYLANDS

## PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

AUTUMN TERM – FRIDAY 21ST NOVEMBER

### MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF SCHOOL – MRS PRYER

Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been another busy week with rehearsals starting for Year 1 and Reception Christmas Plays. The children in Nursery have participated in a range of activities linked to the story 'Owl Babies' while the children in Reception have been exploring the story 'Ning and The Night Spirits'. Year 1 have been subtracting using a number line while Year 2 have been exploring symmetry in shapes. Year 3 compared human and animal skeletons in science, Year 4 thought about their goals for the future in PSHE, Year 5 have extended sentences using co-ordinating conjunctions and Year 6 have been adding and subtracting fractions. The children in the ASC have also been solving subtraction number sentences while the children in the Nest have been exploring all things wintery.

The weather has turned much colder this week so please ensure your child has a warm coat for breaktime and lunchtime. Remember to name coats, hats, gloves and scarves so they can be returned to your child if needed.

In addition, some PE lessons are still taking place outside so jogging bottoms or tracksuit bottoms (dark colours) can be added to your child's PE kit. Next week, we will be sharing our new reading reward system with the children in assembly. Further information will be shared in the newsletter next week. In the meantime, please encourage your child to read at home 5 times a week.

I hope you all have a lovely weekend.



**School Attendance Target: 95.00 %**



**This week's attendance: 92.72 %**

**The class with the best attendance in KS1 was Mrs Andrade's Class with 99.20 %**

**The class with the best attendance in KS2 was Miss White's Class with 97.33 %**

**If your child is absent, contact must be made to the School Office EVERY school day that your child is absent.**

**Please report your child's absence by phone 01268 417893, ParentMail or by email:  
admin@merrylands-pri.essex.sch.uk.**

**RESPECT**

**KINDNESS**

**PERSEVERANCE**

# STAR OF THE WEEK

## CERTIFICATE FOCUS: RESPECT

Nursery: Joshua A  
 Nest: Henry J  
 ASC: Zekria S  
 Reception, Mrs Anthony: Jeremiah S  
 Reception, Mrs Sullivan: Heesha S  
 Reception, Miss Bagridge: Holly L  
 Year 1, Mrs King: Sadie D  
 Year 1, Mrs Camoccio: Horia Q  
 Year 1, Mrs Andrade: Luena M  
 Year 2, Mrs Didham: Noelle-Gifty A  
 Year 2, Miss Milne: Presley W  
 Year 2, Mrs Cooper/Mrs Christie: Tyla B

Year 3, Mrs Almond: Hanaa M  
 Year 3, Miss Gilmore: Evie F  
 Year 3, Miss Medina: Thinara S  
 Year 4, Miss Lee: Louie L  
 Year 4, Miss Miller: Rose P  
 Year 4, Miss Atkin: Mattias-C A  
 Year 5, Miss Day: Bryan F-V  
 Year 5, Mr Taylor: Keira B  
 Year 5, Miss Osborne: Damilola A  
 Year 6, Miss White: Eliana E  
 Year 6, Mrs Thour: Daisy G

### BADGES

Our Merrylands badges are given to the pupils who demonstrate the school values at all times.

They are good role models to other pupils and work hard to improve every single day. They try their best and persevere in all lessons, complete homework on time, have good school attendance and show kindness to their peers.

Congratulations to this week's winners.

Reception	Ember P
Year 1	Avineet B
Year 2	Zyana E
Year 3	Abigail A
Year 4	Margot L
Year 5	Zac A
Year 6	Alyzza W-C

### UPCOMING DIARY DATES

#### NOVEMBER

28.11.2025 St. Andrew's Day Special Dinner

#### DECEMBER

04.12.2025 Year 1 Christmas Performance 10.00am - 11.00am

10.12.2025 Year 2 Eastgate Singing Performance for St Luke's Hospice  
 10.00am - 11.45am

10.12.2025 & 11.12.2025 Year 6 Parents/Carers Meeting

11.12.2025 Reception Christmas Performance 2.15pm - 3.00pm

12.12.2025 Christmas Dinner & Christmas Jumper Day / Save The Children

15.12.2025 Nursery Carol Singing 10.45am - 11.30am and 2.15pm - 3.00pm

16.12.2025 Whole School Pantomime

17.12.2025 KS1 & KS2 Choir - Carols around the Christmas Tree 3.30pm - 4.15pm



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# BOOK OF THE WEEK

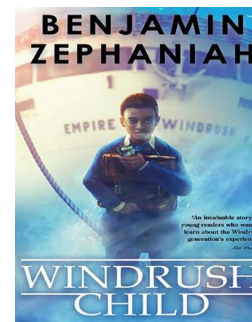


Year 6 have been reading 'The Windrush Child' by Benjamin Zephaniah. It tells the story of a 10-year-old Leonard who travels with his mother from Jamaica to England: The Land of Hope and Glory.

The book follows Leonard's struggles to adapt to life in England during the early 1960s and the historical events that led to much prejudice and injustice. Year 6 have been learning about how life was different to the modern day and have worked hard putting themselves in the characters' shoes.

"I found it interesting finding out that back in the day, people were treated differently and potentially bullied because of the colour of their skin."  
Teddy

"I enjoyed learning about how similar and different Jamaica was compared to England. We looked at weather, location, food and culture." Aaliyah



# SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

Speech and Language UK are offering a free 2 hour workshop via Zoom for families and carers in Essex. This workshop is for you if your child has a social communication challenge with or without a diagnosis of Autism.

Learn more about social communication skills in young children and how they develop, how to help your child, if aged 18 Months to 5 Years, at their very early (or pre verbal) stage of development, strategies that work well to support social communication skills at home and resources you can access.

Friday 12th December 10am-12pm.

This is a virtual session and will be delivered via Zoom. Please register your interest with us by emailing: [Julie.hall@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Julie.hall@essex.gov.uk). Please note there is a limited number of spaces.

# PHYSICAL EDUCATION



## Sportsperson of the Half Term...

### Luke Littler

#### Who is Luke Littler?

Luke Littler is a professional darts player who was born on 21st January 2007 in Cheshire, England. He developed an interest in darts at a young age, after his father bought him a toy magnetic dartboard when he was just a toddler. Luke has said that one way he prepares for competitions is to eat some of his favourite foods such as ham and cheese omelettes and pizzas!

#### What has Luke achieved?

In 2021, at the age of 14, Littler won his first senior level title at the Irish Open – he competed against people much older than him. In November 2023, he won the PDC World Youth Championship title. In January 2025, Luke became the youngest player ever to win the Professional Darts Corporation World Championship title at just 17 years old. His win came shortly after being named the BBC Young Sports Personality of the Year 2024.



## Deliver the Post



**What you need:** a swimming pool with a lifeguard, a supervising adult, a kickboard and some waterproof objects

#### How to play

- Begin on one side of the pool and place a number of objects on the poolside.
- Taking one object at a time, place it on your kickboard and holds your kickboard across your chest.
- Kick on your back to the opposite side of the pool to deliver your object, then swim back to pick up the next object.
- Repeat until all of the objects have been delivered to the other side.
- Playing with someone else? Have a race to see who can deliver all objects first.

Make this harder by not using a kickboard and carrying the object.



[www.getset4education.co.uk](http://www.getset4education.co.uk)

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## FOOD BANK DONATIONS

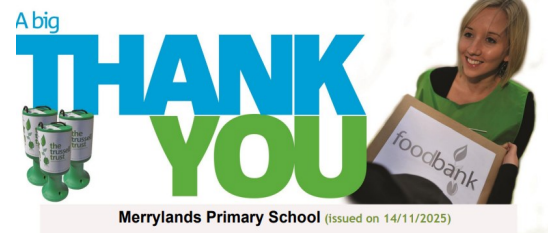
Following on from the generous donations we received for our Harvest Appeal, we are happy to inform you the donations have been successfully donated to Basildon Foodbank located at The Gore, Basildon.

Your donations weighing 125.5kg made a big difference to the local people and families in crisis.

Basildon Foodbank first opened in July 2022 offering help to those in need. Basildon Foodbank offers more than food, they offer a life line to those who need it most.

Last year, Basildon Foodbank helped 3,069 people in crisis.

Thank you so much to everyone who kindly donated.



for supporting Basildon Foodbank. Your 125.5 kg of Food and toiletries donations make a BIG difference to local people in crisis.

Basildon foodbank is part of the Trussell Trust's UK-wide foodbank network. Basildon Foodbank is operated by RCCG Majesty Connections

Registered Charity Number: 1130159

Registered in England and Wales



## BERLESDUNA MATHS COMPETITION



On Thursday 13th November, Murtaza, Shea, Ayan and Joris attended Fairhouse Primary School to represent Merrylands in the Berlesduna Maths Competition.

The boys represented our school brilliantly in their behaviour, manners and of course, maths skills!

Murtaza, Shea, Ayan and Joris came 9th.  
Well done boys!



## ACHIEVEMENTS

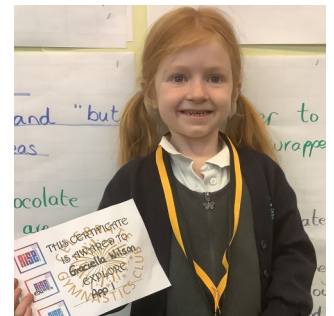
Well done to Freya who took part in the South Essex Gymnastic Competition on Saturday. Freya wowed the judges with her floor routine.

Well done Freya!



On Monday Gracie won a certificate and medal for always trying her best in Acro!

Well Done Gracie!



## FOREST SCHOOL DONATIONS

We are kindly asking for donations of bird feed for the hungry birds nesting in our Forest School Area. Any donations of bird feed would be greatly appreciated. Please ensure the bird feed is in secured in a bag/container.



On Monday 24th November 2025 children will return to school on Week 1.



Please ensure all school lunches are paid for in advance on ScoPay.

Please let the office staff know if there are any changes to your child's dietary needs.

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*Lighter Bites*



OUR LIGHTER LUNCH OPTIONS OF JACKET POTATO & HAM OR CHEESE BAGUETTE are available to ALL PUPILS everyday



MONDAY  
TUESDAY  
WEDNESDAY  
THURSDAY  
FRIDAY

**WEEK 1**

CHICKEN FAJITA WRAP  
QUORN FAJITA WRAP  
WITH POTATO CUBES & SALAD BAR  
DESSERT - RICE PUDDING  
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

SAUSAGE ROLL  
VEGAN ROLL  
WITH SMILEY FACES & SPAGHETTI LOOPS  
DESSERT - HOMEMADE ICED SPRINKLE CAKE  
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

HOMEMADE CHICKEN PIE  
QUORN & VEGETABLE PIE  
WITH SAUTE POTATOES, CARROTS & GRAVY  
DESSERT - FLAPJACK  
FRESH FRUIT & YOGHURT

CHEESE & TOMATO PIZZA  
WITH PASTA IN HOMEMADE TOMATO SAUCE & SALAD BAR  
DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY  
FRESH FRUIT

FISH FINGERS  
CHEDDAR WHIRL  
WITH CHIPS & BAKED BEANS  
DESSERT - STRAWBERRY SWIRL MOUSSE  
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

**WEEK 2**

BEEF MEATBALLS  
VEGAN MEATBALLS  
WITH PASTA IN HOMEMADE TOMATO SAUCE & PEAS  
DESSERT - AMERICAN PANCAKES & GOLDEN SYRUP  
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

BUTCHERS CHICKEN NUGGETS  
VEGETABLE NUGGETS  
WITH CHIPS & BAKED BEANS  
DESSERT - HOMEMADE SPONGE CAKE & CUSTARD  
FRESH FRUIT & YOGHURT

BUTCHERS PORK SAUSAGE  
VEGAN SAUSAGES  
WITH MASH POTATO, YORKSHIRE PUDDING, PEAS, CARROTS & GRAVY  
DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY  
FRESH FRUIT

CHICKEN CURRY  
VEGETABLE CURRY  
WITH STEAMED RICE & SWEETCORN  
DESSERT - GOLDEN OAT FLAPJACK  
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

BATTERED FISH  
VEGETABLE FINGERS  
WITH SMILEY FACES & PEAS  
DESSERT - ICE CREAM  
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT

**WEEK 3**

BREADED CHICKEN BURGER  
QUORN BURGER  
WITH CHIPS & SALAD BAR  
DESSERT - HOMEMADE CHOCOLATE SPRINKLE CAKE  
FRESH FRUIT + YOGURT

BACON MACARONI CHEESE  
MACARONI CHEESE  
WITH PEAS  
DESSERT - SEASONAL FRUIT & YOGHURT

BUTCHERS ROAST CHICKEN  
QUORN FILLET  
WITH ROAST POTATOES, YORKSHIRE PUDDING, GREEN BEANS, CARROTS & GRAVY  
DESSERT - FRUIT JELLY

BEEF BOLOGNESE  
VEGETABLE BOLOGNESE  
WITH FUSILLI PASTA & MIXED VEGETABLES  
DESSERT - HOMEMADE FLAPJACK  
FRESH FRUIT + YOGURT

FISH FINGERS  
CHEESE OMELETTE  
WITH POTATO WEDGES & SPAGHETTI HOOPS  
DESSERT - CHOCOLATE SWIRL MOUSSE  
FRESH FRUIT & YOGURT



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## **Online Safety**

### **Do you know who your children are talking to?**

Most Primary School children would be able to design an 'Online Safety' poster that would cover all of the points about staying safe on the internet but would this knowledge keep our children safe online?

Many parents and professionals honestly believe that they are fully up to date regarding Internet Safety and with this assured mindset they then seek to keep children safe. This mindset leads to a false sense of security and often results in young people being unable to speak to parents and professionals when things go wrong.

If a child today was walking to school and a man in a van pulled up and offered them sweets, then every one of them would immediately recognize this as a risk. Identifying the risk, every child in the country would then have no fear whatsoever telling their parent or school about the incident. It is inconceivable that a child would be punished for this disclosure.

Fast forward to today. The modern risk is highly likely to play out online. The problem we are up against is that so many children will not spot a risky situation and worse still, even when they know something is wrong, they will not tell their parents as the more likely response will be the loss of whatever device they were using.

We recently asked all children in the school to sign our Acceptable Use Policy about how they will use the internet and devices in school. During that process, quite a number of children confessed that they have "chatted" with people online who are strangers to them and have not told their parents.

We would encourage you to have an open discussion with your children about online behavior as soon as you can, and regularly monitor their activity. The risks are very real.

The advert below is for an event held by the "2 Johns" who are experts in this field and are running a free online session for parents. We would encourage you to attend this - you will definitely learn a great deal and feel better informed and equipped to keep your children safe.

If you have any worries about such matters - please feel free to pop in and see me.

Mr Andrews

Deputy Headteacher



**Free Online Safety and Exploitation Awareness Session for Parents/Carers**

**Tuesday 2nd December 2025**  
**7:00-9:00pm**  
**Delivered virtually via Zoom**

**If you want to learn more about how young people are spending their time online and how to spot the signs of exploitation – this is the event for you.**

**The session will provide you with key tips and advice to protect your young people from online grooming and exploitation.**

**To attend – click on the below link**

**WALK ONLINE or [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_5ecJdZ6uRuKKqVZDFd06tg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5ecJdZ6uRuKKqVZDFd06tg)**

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MINECRAFT



Still the best-selling game of all time, Minecraft is a bastion of creativity and community, with hundreds of millions of players building and crafting in its almost endless world. The popularity of Minecraft among gamers of all ages means it's important to remain informed about the game, including how to play it safely and whether it's suitable for the children in your care. That's why we've created this guide explaining the risks associated with Minecraft and how to ensure a purely enjoyable gaming experience.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### SCARY ELEMENTS

While Minecraft can be seen as a kind of 'digital LEGO', certain game modes include creatures accompanied by eerie sound effects. These can be a bit too frightening for some younger players, potentially leading to distressing in-game combat and other encounters – although the combat is quite basic and free from any real depiction of violence.

### GRIEFING

Some players in Minecraft take pleasure in deliberately damaging or destroying another person's creations. This behaviour, known as 'griefing', is a form of bullying – it intentionally ruins someone else's experience by erasing hours of their work and forcing them to start over. Many public servers regard griefing as a serious offence and often ban those who engage in it.

### ADDICTIVENESS

Minecraft's focus on creativity means that, as with any creative endeavour, it can be easy to get carried away. If your child is finding it difficult to manage their time because they're drawn in by Minecraft's gameplay loop of resource gathering and building elaborate projects, it could have a knock-on effect on their social interactions and schoolwork.

### PUBLIC SERVERS AND COMMUNICATIONS

With public servers being so easily accessible in Minecraft, it's highly likely that children will end up chatting with strangers through the in-game text chat. Some servers even place an emphasis on social interaction, actively encouraging communication between players. While there's nothing inherently wrong with this, it does carry certain risks. In addition to the concerns around speaking with strangers online, players who host their own servers may have their IP addresses exposed, posing a further security concern.

### ADDITIONAL PURCHASES

Minecraft is available as a free trial on a variety of devices; however, the full game requires a one-off purchase. After that, players have the option to buy additional cosmetic upgrades or subscribe to Minecraft Realms, Realms is an entirely optional subscription service that allows users to run their own private server to play with friends. Without proper supervision, younger players may end up making unintended or excessive purchases.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### CHOOSE THE RIGHT MODE

Selecting Creative or Peaceful mode allows children to play Minecraft without having to contend with enemies. It's also a great way for you to get used to playing the game with them, since the difficulty level is far lower. This allows you to work together on a long-term project, creating something special without the threat of enemies and creatures attacking you or damaging your building.

### HOST A PRIVATE SERVER

The easiest way to find a safe server for children to play on is to make one yourself. Hosting a server prevents strangers from finding it, unless they've been given its address and password. A private server also lets you control who's allowed to enter and – if necessary – ban anyone who shouldn't be there. This is the closest equivalent to parental control in Minecraft. Hosting a private server, however, will cost a monthly fee.

### TALK ABOUT STRANGERS

At some point in their lives, almost everyone will make contact with a stranger online. Talking to children about online safety, therefore, is essential – as is having a plan for dealing with any hostile or difficult people. It's important that a child knows never to tell a stranger about themselves online and that they should come to you straight away if they do encounter a problem.

### RESEARCH CONTENT CREATORS

Much of Minecraft's early stages can be an exercise in frustration for players who don't know where to start. Thankfully, there's a wealth of material online and in video format to help you learn the basics. Just be mindful that some of this content may not be appropriate for children, so you should consider watching it yourself first.

### PLAY MINECRAFT WITH YOUR CHILD

As a creative building tool, Minecraft makes it great fun for children to team up and construct vast buildings accompanied by imaginative landscapes, much like working with LEGO or model kits. Playing in a game mode that includes enemies can encourage critical thinking and teamwork; however, you should consider which game mode is appropriate for the child in your care.

## Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is Gaming Editor at the Daily Star, and has worked in games media for more than 5 years. A long-time gaming enthusiast, he is also a parent and therefore a keen advocate of online safety for children of all ages.



The National College



Essex County Council  
Special Educational Needs  
and Disabilities







SPACE

## **SPACE offers free support to families of children and young people with SEND.**

Delivered by peer educators – all parents and carers with lived experience.

### **Get support your way:**

-  **in person** – meet us at Local Offer roadshows, coffee mornings, and community events
-  **by phone** – talk one-to-one with a peer educator
-  **online** – join webinars on key topics, led by peer educators
-  **on the SPACE website** – find helpful info and guidance anytime



Book your place for an online session, or a phone call today!

[parent-send-support.essex.gov.uk](http://parent-send-support.essex.gov.uk)